NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: A NEW VISION FOR AN OLD HILL, 1630–1900


3. Ibid., 75.

4. The State House Bulfinch designed later became Hartford City Hall.

5. Within a few years of the launching of the syndicate, however, Bulfinch sold his shares to Benjamin Joy. Woodward and Scollay sold theirs to Hepzibah Swan and the other remaining Proprietors.

6. Harrison Gray Otis also served as Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for two terms, as president of the State Senate for four terms, and as a U.S. senator.

7. The house was eventually relocated in 1925, some forty feet back from its original location, so that Cambridge Street could be widened. It has stood the test of time, like its two sibling houses, and is now the home of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

8. He refused to allow his wife to bail him out since he believed the charges unjust, but he did allow Hepzibah to send him an annual allowance that made prison life more bearable.


10. Chestnut and Walnut Streets, for instance, were laid out in 1799, and Pinckney Street in 1802.

11. Beacon Hill has witnessed many such neighbor-driven actions in the two hundred years since the Proprietors and the State House construction first attracted public interest to the area.


16. Oliver Wendell Homes, Sr., Elsie Venner (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861).

17. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., observed that Beacon Hill "holds the sifted few," referring to a comment by William Stoughton, a Mayflower passenger: "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice seed into the wilderness."

19. Dexter Smith, Cyclopaedia of Boston and Vicinity (Boston: Cashin & Smith, 1886), 105.
22. "Originally and naturally, there is no such thing as slavery. Joseph was rightfully no more a slave to his Brethren, than they were to him, and they had no more Authority to sell him, than they had to slay him." Samuel Sewall, The Selling of Joseph (1700; reprint, Northampton, Mass.: Gehenna Press, 1969), 8.
31. Ibid., 220.

CHAPTER TWO: BEACON HILL RENAISSANCE, 1900–1930

2. This is the land between Charles Street and the Charles River.
3. John Codman, in a private paper, wrote, "These promoters and their architects were friends of Mssrs. Codman and Street, and were heartily in accord with their vision of what the rehabilitation of the area should be."
5. Ibid., April 12, 1930.
7. She went to Mrs. Quincy Shaw’s School in Boston, which, recalled Marian’s youngest sister, Margaret Shurcliff, “was a unique, and for those days, progressive school, backed by Mrs. Quincy Shaw
from idealistic rather than profit motives." Margaret Shurcliff, *Lively Days* (Taipei: Literature House, 1965), 7. There, young Marian was exposed to Mrs. Shaw's love for the concrete and the empirical in education.

8. Nichols graduated from Radcliffe a year later, *magna cum laude*.


10. On the occasion of Marian Nichols's commencement, Professor Francis Cabot Lowell said that Radcliffe "has all along asserted to Harvard the right of women to higher education." In the lives of women like Marian Nichols, education had enhanced both their responsibility to society at large and their personal rights as women.

11. The Progressives also tried to give the people more direct control over the government by enabling voters to short-circuit the legislature and vote on measures at general elections. For three decades the Progressives made great strides in their fight for civil betterment, but, with the coming of World War I, the movement gave way to other concerns and many of the Progressives' accomplishments were all but forgotten.

12. From 1903 until her death sixty years later, she served as secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of the Massachusetts Civil Service Reform Association. In 1915 she became the first woman member of the Council of the National Civil Service Reform League, after being an examiner of the U.S. Civil Service Commission. Between 1922 and 1939 she was secretary of the Beacon Hill Association. She was also president of the Women's Industrial, Civil, and Suffrage League, and chair of the Legislative Committee of the Suffrage Association of Boston. The list of commitments and contributions goes on and on.


14. Marian C. Nichols ran for state representative as an independent from the Beacon Hill district. She won 775 votes, losing to the Republican candidates, James Hunnewell, who won 6,831 votes, and Lee Shattuck, who had 5,998 votes.


19. Ibid.


21. The first meeting of the association, on December 4, 1922, served to formalize the organization and announce its creation to the public. It was not until the second meeting, in April 1923, that the top leadership of the association was finally put in place. Grace Minns abruptly resigned from her position in February and forever disappeared from the scene. The Executive Committee subsequently convened the same month and voted to ask Arthur D. Hill to serve as president and Mrs. Ralph Hornblower to be the vice president (her candidacy was unsuccessful). Arthur Hill accepted the presidency and recommended March C. Bennett as his vice president. They also voted to en-
large the Board of Directors from three to seven members, bringing in two new men, Felix Frankfurter, a Harvard law professor and future judge of the U.S. Supreme Court, and Bernard J. Rothwell, a former president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce. Also added to the board were two women: Mrs. Allen Chamberlain, whose husband authored the classic book Beacon Hill, and Mrs. Ralph Hornblower, the former candidate for the vice presidency of the association.


25. The recommendations included restricting Beacon Hill to residential use free from business except on Charles Street; restricting Charles Street to local business use and confining it to the first floor of the buildings if possible; limiting the maximum height of buildings west of the State House to sixty-five feet or five stories; keeping additional business from being introduced within the area mentioned; and regulating the construction of future apartment houses on Beacon Hill.


27. Boston Transcript, April 12, 1930.

28. Anticipating opposition from members and neighbors, the zoning committee did not include lower Beacon Street between Charles Street and the Embankment in its proposal of 1928.

29. Frank Bourne to Marian Nichols, December 9, 1925, Beacon Hill Civic Association records (hereinafter cited as BHCAR).

30. Frank Bourne, Report to Beacon Hill Association, December 16, 1926, BHCAR.

31. The petition was from David H. Stone et al. of Cambridge.

32. Longfellow wrote, "I stood on the bridge at midnight, / as the clocks were striking the hour, / and the moon rose o'er the city, / behind the dark church tower." (He was referring to Charles Street Meeting House.) From The Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow, ed. Horace E. Scudder (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), 63.

33. A wood-framed church was built on the current site in 1737, but was subsequently razed by the British troops in 1775. Asher Benjamin rebuilt it in 1806.

34. Boston Evening Transcript, February 1, 1926.

35. Boston Herald, October 6, 1930.

36. Beacon Hill Association first annual meeting, Minutes, 1923, BHCAR.


39. It was not all bad news on the parking front. Beacon Hill residents pooled their resources and secured two parking garages on the Hill in 1925. The Charles Street Garage, at Number 144–160, built in 1919 on a 12,600-square foot parcel, held two hundred cars. Up for sale in 1925, the well-located garage attracted several interested parties, not all of whom wanted it to remain a garage. Twenty concerned neighbors, worried about the uncertain future of the property, formed a stock
company to purchase both the Charles Street Garage and the newly constructed garage on Cambridge Street. Entitled Charles Street Garage Company, the group wanted to operate the properties “under the control of residents vitally interested in the neighborhood.” Together, the two garages held a total of five hundred cars. Even though the two garages could not solve all the parking problems, the Charles Street Garage Company helped keep the oldest garage on the Hill in the hands of its residents.

40. This was the title of Van Wyck Brooks’s 1915 volume.
42. Ibid., 306.
43. Ibid., 309.
44. Ibid., 305.
45. Ibid., 311.
47. *Boston Transcript*, December 24, 1929.
54. Ibid., January 26, 1935.
55. Ibid., December 28, 1936.

CHAPTER THREE: WAR AND PEACE, 1940–1950

1. A letter from the Beacon Hill Association and a letter from the police station on Joy Street were sent to its members asking for volunteers to take air raid instruction classes. Captain Francis Tierman’s letter had asked the association to “secure suitable men for this vital first line of defense.” Beacon Hill has never been short of volunteers for worthy causes. The letter asking to “secure suitable men,” however, aroused some humorous responses from female residents of the Hill. “The notice said ‘men’; but perhaps they are also using women,” wrote Susan Herman. “In reply to your letter, this answer will surprise you,” said another. “It is written to say that Miss Olive Seires of 46 Chestnut Street and I have just completed the Air Raid Warden’s course at the Massachusetts Women’s
Civilian Defense School... If a real emergency arises in which women are needed as well as men, we would be glad to help in any way within our strength and natural limitation.” It was signed August 2, 1941, by Hope Gray, BHCAR.

2. The dome of the State House was restored to its original gold color in June 1947.

3. Annual elections were held and some essential activities maintained.

4. Letter to John Codman, May 8, 1945, BHCAR.

5. Letter to John Codman, May 10, 1945, BHCAR.

6. Margaret Welch to Edward A. Taft, January 29, 1945, BHCAR.

7. Edward A. Taft to John Codman, January 31, 1945, BHCAR.


10. Ibid., October 24, 1946.

11. Ibid., March 1, 1947. The Community Church of Boston at Copley Square offered a series of courses on family relationships. Lecturers for the courses included faculty from Harvard University, Simmons College, the Family Society of Boston, and the National Council on Family Relations. The radio station WEEI also began a new weekly broadcast entitled “Marriage—for Better or—Divorce.”

12. Ibid., April 19, 1947. The writer called himself “Epimenides.” He indicated that he lived in an attic room on Charles Street.

13. Ibid., April 14, 1948. Allan Forbes, Jr., wrote, “It is with a sense of mixed horror and alarm that I read the Poetry Forum in the April 7th issue of the Beacon Hill News. In her discourse on war serving as an introduction to her father’s poems, Miss Jackson speaks of the miracle of war.”


15. Ibid.


18. Ibid.


22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

25. Words and music by Francis W. Hatch, file in BHCAR.


27. James Jackson Storrow, 1864–1926, a graduate of Harvard Law School, was a lawyer, a banker, the first president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the City Council. He had worked tirelessly to make the Charles River Basin “one of the noblest pieces of city planning in the world.” Henry Greenleaf Pearson, Son of New England: James Jackson Storrow (Boston: Thomas Todd, 1932), 33–42.


29. Ibid.

30. Their study concluded that the highway would not only fail to alleviate traffic congestion in Boston, but probably increase it. “If merely commercial interests should ever be given precedence over such high civic values as are represented by this beautiful waterfront park,” wrote the Protective Association on March 22, 1949, “no warrant for such encroachment has been shown in this case.” The Massachusetts Civic League also reached the same technical conclusion. In a letter to the Boston Herald, the league wrote, “unless and until an express highway down the embankment was connected with comparable and further facilities at the downtown end, it would in no way solve the traffic problem. In the morning it would result in an infinitely worse traffic snarl than now.” Boston Herald, March 7, 1949.

31. Richard Wait, an attorney with the firm Choate, Hall & Stewart, filed a taxpayer’s suit against the city, challenging the city’s right to build a highway through the parkway, citing an 1875 statute that gave residents the right to protect parkland from encroachment. He argued that without consent to the city through an election, the land built as an esplanade in 1903 between Back Street and the walk at the river’s edge could not be used legally as a public way. Assistant Attorney General William S. Kinney, representing the Metropolitan District Commission and the City of Boston, argued that the law cited by Wait did not apply because the parkland was acquired by the city by the right of eminent domain.

32. Rosemary Whiting, “Autobiography,” 113. (This unpublished manuscript remains in its author’s possession.)

33. Ibid., 209–212.


38. During the first six months of 1950, Commissioner Callahan estimated that over thirty-three million dollars in public projects would be advertised for bids. Among them were several sections of Route 128 and a Springfield bypass of Route 20. Termed “Boston’s traffic life-line,” the proposed central artery would funnel traffic on an elevated highway from the Mystic River Bridge, with a connection to Storrow Drive, and through the North and West Ends to the Sumner Tunnel. It was expected to be completed in 1953.


41. In 1908 George F. Parkman had bequeathed his residence on Beacon Street and five million dollars for Boston’s public parks so that the Common "shall never be diverted from its present use as a public park."

42. In a letter to the governor, John Codman wrote: "Why would a private corporation be allowed to use public lands for what amounts to a public utility with no restrictions on rates to be charged, and with no city taxes on their improvements at a rental which could allow unrestricted profits?" This opened the way, said Codman, for the mayor to write his own terms with his own friends. Quoted in Beacon Hill News, February 4, 1948. Attorney John E. Hannigan shared Codman’s sentiment and called the garage project "a barefaced steal." Richard Wait, a Beacon Hill resident who was active in the protest against Storrow Drive, also challenged the constitutionality of granting the garage tax-exempt status. The association commissioned the architectural firm Bourne, Connor, Nichols & Whiting to conduct a study of the feasibility of an underground garage. After a detailed analysis of the cost and engineering specifications, the firm, in its report to the Beacon Hill Association, concluded that a garage under the Common of proportions as planned would not be feasible.


45. The West End was originally called "New Field" or "New Boston" in colonial days. The first landowner of the West End was the Reverend James Allen. His pastureland stretched thirty-eight acres north and south of today’s Cambridge Street.


47. The first of the two federal housing acts was passed in 1949, allocating five hundred million dollars to assist cities with their urban development projects. The Federal Housing Act was passed in 1954. Its main objectives included the prevention of the spread of blight through strict housing standards, the rehabilitation of salvageable areas by replanning and other public improvement, and the clearance and redevelopment of nonsalvageable areas. The federal government hoped with the act to provide incentives to homeowners and private investors by extending credit and favorable mortgage terms to them. The Federal Housing Administration also provided mortgage insurance for residential rehabilitation and construction for families displaced from their homes as a result of government action. In the case of Boston, the federal government created a significant incentive for the city by providing two-thirds of the forty million dollars allocated for urban renewal.


49. The chairman of the Build America Better Council of the National Association of Real Estate Boards claimed that labor demand for property renovation—in order to bring property up to a
required standard—“is sufficient to take up any employment lag resulting from a possible recession in new construction.” The West End Project was also regarded by many initially as a solution to the dilemma posed by a deteriorated section close to the heart of Boston.


51. Ibid., April 24, 1958. Both Piemonte and Lee foresaw the “human cost” of the project—the social and psychological consequences of displacing more than two thousand people from the only homes and neighborhood they knew.

52. Ibid.

53. Fisher and Hughes, *The Last Tenement*, 69. Federal red tape and controversies delayed the planned construction, while the BRA, in order to collect some tax revenue, leased the vacant land to private companies as parking lots.

54. Ibid., 83.

55. Ibid., 90.


57. Charlestown, Jamaica Plain, and a few other neighborhoods were spared a similar fate as a result of the public outcry over the fate of the West End.

58. Two students from the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture, Carl J. Weinhardt, Jr., and Henry Milton, were recruited by the association to conduct a detailed survey of Beacon Hill.

59. According to Barbara B. Walker, then the publicity chairperson of the association.


63. Ibid.


65. When the Beacon Hill Association was incorporated in January 1955, the name was changed to Beacon Hill Civic Association. Articles of Organization, January 26, 1955, BHCAR.

66. Gael Mahoney, letter to Beacon Hill residents, July 1955, file in BHCAR.

**CHAPTER FOUR: REINVENTING BEACON HILL, 1960-2000**


2. Ibid., January 12, 1960.


10. Ibid., August 8, 1960.

11. Ibid., April 15, 1966.


13. Bowdoin Street lies parallel to Hancock Street on the other side of the State House; it runs between Beacon Street and Cambridge Street.

14. Representing the Park Service was Edwin Small, the regional director.

15. Owned by the New England College of Pharmacy until 1962.


18. Ibid.


27. "I have a feeling for the old houses on Beacon Hill and the way they have been preserved," wrote Dorothy King, a resident of Temple Street, to the president of Suffolk University. "Looking just as they did a hundred or more years ago when our ancestors lived in them. With high rise and change all around us, the Hill remains a tiny memorial to the past." (Letter to Suffolk University, March 7, 1967.) Wrote Katherine Kane, a state representative: "This is not a run-down area of lodging houses; young families have been buying these homes and remodeling them in the best Boston traditions."

28. Members of the committee and other property owners also sent letters to the Board of Appeals opposing the granting of a variance to the university. They argued that allowing the school to expand into the residential neighborhood would not only damage but in time destroy the neighborhood and injure the city, much like what had happened to the Back Bay community.
29. “Once every decade a major dispute over zoning and building design seems to erupt on Beacon Hill,” wrote the association. “Past generations have succeeded in using these disputes to reduce the maximum height of buildings along the edges of Beacon Hill, and in providing for a system of architectural review of the mass and appearance of proposed new buildings and renovations. A new and major crisis now faces Beacon Hill.” Each generation should rise to its own emergencies, said the association, asking motivated members to finance the appeal to the higher court.


31. Ibid.

32. The committee sponsored the showing, at the Livingston Stebbins Center on Joy Street, of an antiwar film produced by the British Broadcasting Company entitled “Vietnam Journal.” Among the local politicians they targeted was Congressman Thomas “Tip” O’Neil, whose realigned electoral district would include Beacon Hill. They petitioned him to hold open hearings on the war.


35. Ibid., April 1967.

36. Ibid., November 1967.

37. Ibid., November 1969. Drugs became the magnet, said the *News*, “that makes Boston Common, Charles Street, and the Hill so attractive to hippies, junkies, and a familiar assortment of sightseers and hangers-on.”

38. Ibid., September 1968.

39. Ibid.

40. This was created under the auspices of the Boston Metropolitan Commission. The task force was chaired by Robert Gordon of Pinckney Street.


42. The free clinic was open from 6 to 8 P.M. during the week and 3 to 5 P.M. on weekends.


45. Ibid., February 1970.


48. Senator Ames commented that the new center would “contribute a great deal to civic progress and betterment in Beacon Hill and surrounding areas.” Mrs. John F. Norton of 6 Rollins Place, chairperson of the Association’s Recreation Committee and later the first president of Hill House, presented an outline of what this centralized site could provide for neighborhood children of all ages.
49. Even though several other bids were received, with the highest bid at $36,650, the council voted unanimously in favor of the $1000 bid from the association, with an amendment restricting the use of the property as a community center only. Any breach of this provision would give the city the right to repossess the building. Responsibilities of the board included the maintenance of the center’s physical condition, the establishment of policies and programs, and the liaison between the Beacon Hill Nursery School, the Beacon Hill Civic Association, and the Beacon Hill community.


52. The play yard was transformed from a parking lot loading ramp.

53. The Reverends William Alberts and Frank McGuire and their volunteers supervised the program.

54. Jack Powers, chairman of the newly formed Education and Culture Committee of the Civic Association, suggested that a street fair would help bring the community together and restore pride in its main street. The idea caught on after some initial resistance. A street fair, many came to believe, could become a major neighborhood festival, creating a greater sense of community while serving as a bonanza for local merchants.

55. Many volunteers helped make the first street fair a success. Among them, Peggy Durkee provided an artistic hand with the publicity and signage, and Fifi Nessen organized the bake and book sales.

56. Some eighty more were added the following year. Even though fund-raising for the association was not an explicit goal, the first fair netted 132 dollars for the Civic Association; this was tripled the second year, and 3,800 dollars were recorded the fourth year.

56. New activities were added to the day, including the Museum of Science Traveling Animal Show sponsored by the Consumer Credit Union, a puppet show sponsored by Another Season Restaurant, and a pie-eating contest sponsored by the Suffolk Franklin Savings Bank. Among the Civic Association-sponsored events were a raffle with more than eighty-five prizes, a hot dog stand, a baked goods table, and a large children’s game area. “You get a feeling of community here,” commented the Boston Globe. In less than a decade, a modest neighborhood gathering announced by typed flyers taped to store windows, remarked the Beacon Hill News, had turned into a city extravaganza, with a volunteer committee of more than one hundred local residents (September 1982).


59. Ibid., December 1978. There were about twenty condominium buildings on the Hill in 1976, according to the newspaper.

60. Ibid., October 1978. Beacon Hill had never, in its two hundred years, claimed Glynn, been a completely wealthy neighborhood. He, for one, enjoyed the hodgepodge of architectural styles and neighbors. If the West End had once been done in by bulldozers in the name of money and progress, this time “it is slower, and more insidious, and better dressed and mannered. But no less deadly.”
61. Ibid., February 1978.


64. The committee first held extensive negotiations with the newly formed Public Facilities Department to reach an agreement on the sale price, settling for seventy-three thousand dollars. The total cost of renovation was estimated at one million dollars, 80 percent of which was construction cost.

65. The selection was Continental Wingate. According to the final arrangement, MHFA would provide a construction loan for one year. Upon completion of the building, a mortgage for a period of forty years would be given by the Government National Mortgage Association, from which the MHFA loan would be repaid. The apartment building was to be owned by the partnership of Bowdoin School Associates, which included a syndicate of investors with Wingate Development Corporation Trust as its general partner. The Beacon Hill Civic Association decided not to become a partner in the syndicate but retained its involvement in tenant selection.

66. The plan called for market-rate rents, with one-bedroom units priced at $384 a month, and two-bedrooms at $462. Twenty-six of the thirty-five apartments would be eligible for the rent subsidy program entitled Section Eight, administered by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. Under this program, tenants would pay no more than 25 percent of their income for rent, and the program would subsidize the balance, including potential rent increases.


68. Interview with John Bok, August 1999.


70. *Boston Globe*, November 26, 1983
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