



The Quincy Point neighborhood near the Fore River Shipyard, December, 1940. Photographs courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USF34-042658-D and LC-USF34-042655-D.

# In the neighborhood

Whether we want to admit it or not, town lines have become class lines. More than ever before, we're willing and able to insulate ourselves from people who "aren't like us."

Not that we didn't segregate ourselves by income in the past. There was a time, not so long ago, when every town had its "other side of the tracks." The difference is that now we tend to look at entire cities and towns as being "the other side of the tracks." We can distance ourselves more easily from people who don't earn as much as we do or didn't go as far in school as we did, and that represents a major social change.

But at the midpoint of the 20th century, in places like Quincy, you had to rub elbows with people of different social classes, whether you

wanted to or not. The mix of neighborhoods ranged from lace curtain to shot-and-a-beer. White collar and blue collar families lived within walking distance of one another, and the routine patterns of daily life brought them together when they shopped or worshipped. Their children – rich, poor, middle-class – shared the same classrooms, played on the same teams, belonged to the same scout troops, and went to the same dances. It wasn't always comfortable – or even pleasant – but that was life.

In fact, to be completely honest, neighborhood life in the "old" Quincy was hardly idyllic. In its industrial heyday, the city was less diverse, less welcoming, less tolerant than it is now.

Or maybe it's more accurate to say that up until the 1980s, diversity in Quincy was defined by the variety of white ethnic groups. There was a Finnish Bath in the Brewer's Corner neighborhood, and the Viking Club on the Quincy/Braintree Line, a (mostly) Italian bocce club in South Quincy, a bunch of Irish social clubs, several synagogues and a Jewish Community Center, and even a Syrian bakery. But in a city of 85,000 there were few people whose roots were in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. In fact, you could have counted them on your fingers and toes . . . without having to take off both shoes.

Today, that's no longer the case. Immigrants from China, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Middle East, and a number of African countries have made lives for themselves in Quincy. Many are working at jobs in the new economic mix that includes high tech, health care, and financial services; others have used their entrepreneurial skills to start businesses. Together, they've breathed new life into an old industrial city. And, by almost any measure, that represents progress – progress that might not have been possible without economic change.

## Quincy Demographics: Then and Now

	1950		2000
Total Population:	83,835	Total Population:	88,025
White Non-Hispanic	99.9%	White Non-Hispanic	78.4%
		Chinese	10.4%
		Black	2.2%
		Hispanic	2.1%
		Vietnamese	1.9%
		Two or more races	1.8%
		Asian Indian	1.3%
		Other race	0.9%
		Other Asian	0.7%
		Filipino	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University