

Living Integration



Liberals, Race, and Class in the Integration of Hyde Park High School, 1947–1969

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In March 2006, Betti Ziembra resigned from teaching at Hyde Park Academy High School on the South Side of Chicago. Ziembra was only a few months shy of having taught the thirty-four years needed to qualify for retirement, yet she decided she could not stay in the increasingly violent school after witnessing dozens of students attack — possibly with murderous intent — another student in her classroom. “I left out of fear,” she explained. “I’ve had it. I quit. There’s no way I’m going back there.”¹ Violence is, indeed, only one of several serious problems facing the nearly 100 percent African-American school. In 2006, the school had a graduation rate of 68.4 percent; its average ACT score was 17.1 (compared to 20.3 statewide); less than half of its eleventh graders were “meeting or exceeding standards” on the reading portion of the Prairie State Achievement Examination, and when it came to math, less than a fifth of the students passed muster.²

1. Mark J. Konkol and Rosalind Rossi, “Teachers quitting ‘out of fear,’” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 12 March 2006, A21.

2. *Illinois School Report Card for Hyde Park Academy High School*, Chicago Public Schools (Chicago, 2006).

But Hyde Park had not always been such a troubled school: half a century earlier, Hyde Park High School (as it was then named) “was considered to be one of the top public schools in the nation.”³ The history of the school’s demise can be traced in relation to the changes in the race of its students; the school performed exceptionally well when its student body was all-white, maintained in many ways its reputation for excellence during the twenty years it was integrated, but deteriorated rapidly once resegregated as an all-black school. However, the academic decline cannot be charged solely to racial changes, as many other changes occurred in the school and its neighborhoods during these years.

At first glance, the long-term failure of Hyde Park High School to remain integrated and to provide a strong education to its students places it comfortably in the history of the nation’s failure to desegregate its schools after *Brown v. Board of Education*. School segregation today is placed at levels equal to those present before *Brown*.⁴ Desegregation was not a failure during this entire period — some progress was made, mostly in the South until the 1980s — but a series of decisions by the Supreme Court combined with a lack of national political will halted further desegregation and even undid much of what had been achieved.⁵

3. Timuel Black, interview by Katherine Lammers, 5 March 2007. For this study, seventeen former students and teachers of the school were interviewed. Fourteen former students were interviewed; their attendance ranged the years from 1952–69. Five of the students were white and nine were black. There were students of both races from each of the decades. One of the white students from the 1950s was also a teacher in the 1960s. Additionally, three other teachers from the 1960s were interviewed, two black and one white.

4. Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of a Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (California: Three Rivers Press, 2006).

5. Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton, and the Harvard Project on School Desegre-

Historians blame desegregation's failure not only on Southern segregationists but also, significantly, on Northern liberal elites who seemed willing to advocate desegregation only so long as their children remained outside the integrated schools.⁶ The limits of Northern liberal idealism were called into question in 1971, for example, when several northern representatives of the U.S. Congress withdrew their support of integration plans involving busing. This group included every white representative from the state of Michigan, all terrified of losing votes after it became clear that busing plans could mean integration between the suburbs and inner city of Detroit. As Patrick Buchanan, President Nixon's speech writer, put it, "there will be blood in the streets if Northern suburban kids are bused into central city schools."⁷

Buchanan's prediction was validated when the liberal city of Boston began to desegregate its schools using busing. In September, 1974, the Boston Public Schools began to desegregate under intense protest by whites forced to participate. Because of the Supreme Court's decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* earlier that year, the suburbs — where the city's wealthier and better educated whites had moved — were exempt from desegregation. Yet the fierce resistance of white urban families, who were largely working class, demonstrated that Northern support for integration was far from steadfast. Ronald Formisano argues that white resistance to

gation, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996).

6. George R. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston: The History of School Desegregation* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1983); Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Orfield, et al. *Dismantling Desegregation*.

7. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston*, 143, 162–163.

desegregation in Boston had such depth not only because working class whites were racist, but also because they resented the liberal elites who dictated integration but did not themselves take part. Formisano writes: "It [is] especially troubling that desegregation schemes usually began and ended by mixing poor blacks and working class or middle-class whites, while the lives of upper-middle-class and rich whites remained untouched."⁸ Formisano's argument casts liberal elites in an unfavorable light, matching other historians' critical attitudes toward those who failed to stick up for integration when the going got tough.

Hyde Park High School, which served a neighborhood with a particularly well-educated and liberal population, is an important counterpoint to these desegregation histories. It is true that the school is not an example of liberalism's ultimate triumph over the forces of racism and segregation — long term integration failed at the school. Yet documents from the period and interviews with former students and teachers make it clear that many people worked hard to maintain the school's quality and "racial balance" during the twenty years (from the late 1940s to the late 1960s) it was integrated. Many white liberal elites, as well as middle-class blacks, continued to send their children to the school as its student body became increasingly black and, as time went on, poor. They showed sincere dedication to the practice of integration rather than simply its rhetoric, and they continued sending their children to an integrated school even as the school faced the growing challenges of educating a multiracial student body. Indeed, white families in Hyde Park showed a remarkable ability to set aside racial prejudice, in many ways providing the nation with an example of smooth integration. In the end, however, racism proved to be only one of many problems that arose with integration,

8. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, x.

and these problems caused white families only to be comfortable with integration with the black middle-class. In particular, as more poor black families moved into Hyde Park High's boundaries, acceptance of integration waned, and it fell further when violence increased in the immediate vicinity of the school. The final blow to the promise of Hyde Park High came when the community decided to open Kenwood Academy, a nearby high school that would serve the middle-class white and black families living in Hyde Park and Kenwood, and which drew all of the remaining white students out of Hyde Park High. Thus, the story of integration at Hyde Park High School is a story of a community that sincerely strove to achieve lasting integration, but that was ultimately unable to overcome a myriad of obstacles including class prejudice, a legacy of discrimination in education, lack of support from outside of the community, and violence.

"I wouldn't trade my education at HP for anything," said Anita Peterson, a white student who graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1966.⁹ Donald Sharp, an African-American student who graduated in 1956, characterized his time at the school as "probably the best four years of my life."¹⁰ Students who attended Hyde Park High School while it was integrated remember it being one of the most important formative experiences in their lives: in addition to its often stellar academics and impressive range of extracurricular activities, it provided a chance "to see life on the other side of the tracks," an opportunity for students from a great diversity of backgrounds to learn how to interact with each other.¹¹

9. Anita Peterson, interview by Katherine Lammers, 14 February 2007. Anita Peterson is a pseudonym.

10. Donald Sharp, interview by Katherine Lammers, 16 February 2007.

11. Constance Howard, interview by Katherine Lammers, 13 February, 2007.

Constance Howard, a black student in the class of 1960, who is now a representative in the state senate of Illinois, said that "going to Hyde Park was probably one of the best things that happened to me." Brenda Harrell, an African-American student who graduated in 1963, recalled: "We loved this school, it was a wonderful place . . . there were just so many things to do, and also I loved school. . . . I love books, I love reading, so it was a wonderful place for me to be." Carey Horowitz, a white student who graduated in 1963, said: "I have spent my entire life being delighted that I went to Hyde Park, it made me who I am today." Alison Mulberry, a white student, recalled that at the fiftieth reunion of the class of 1956, the alumni "felt that going to Hyde Park High at that time was a very special and formative experience . . . [it was] a standard by which they've measured other experiences in their lives."¹² "It was idyllic," stated Jack Guthman, a white student in the class of 1956. "I remember it being a very warm, open place where people interacted and were friends regardless of race or economics."¹³ Hyde Park High School was, in many ways, the very picture of successful school integration, and such success could only take place in a community genuinely open to a degree of racial integration, even if students tended to have slightly more liberal attitudes toward race than their parents.¹⁴ Hyde Park High's ultimate failure to remain integrated was primarily due to the fact that as the school's racial composition changed both the school and the surrounding

12. Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007; Brenda Harrell, interview by Katherine Lammers, 1 December 2005; Carey Horowitz, interview by Katherine Lammers, 8 March 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview by Katherine Lammers, 27 February 2007.

13. Jack Guthman, interview by Katherine Lammers, 1 December 2005.

14. Brenda Harrell, interview, 1 December 2005; Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007; Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007.

community underwent other significant and often problematic changes.

Hyde Park High School's integration took place because the population in the area it served changed. Originally mostly white (with a small but not insignificant Japanese American population and a few African Americans), it became more integrated as a larger number of African Americans moved into the area. Hyde Park High School is located on 62nd Street and Stony Island Avenue in the neighborhood of Woodlawn; two blocks north of the school Hyde Park begins, and ten blocks north of that lies Kenwood. Hyde Park High School was the only public high school serving these three neighborhoods (save a couple of blocks at the edges) at the time of its integration. Black families began to move into Woodlawn and northern Kenwood in the 1940s seeking to leave behind the desperately crowded conditions of Chicago's "Black Belt." Following the Supreme Court's 1948 decision declaring racially restrictive covenants unconstitutional, their progress hastened as they moved in ever-increasing numbers into all three neighborhoods.¹⁵

The Hyde Park area was not alone in this period, for integration (or racial turnover) was taking place throughout the city. The area was unique, however, in how it responded to racial change. Many white neighborhoods in Chicago greeted their new black residents with strident protest and violence — for example, bombing the homes of black families who lived on predominantly white blocks.¹⁶ Hyde Park-Kenwood, on the other hand, was heavily influenced by the presence of the University of Chicago, located in Hyde Park. The neighborhood was politically liberal, demonstrated by the stances that its city and state government

15. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 136, 143–145.

16. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 41.

representatives took on the issues of the day, including integration.¹⁷ Accordingly, many organizations and individuals in the area embraced integration and worked to develop positive and stable interracial relationships.¹⁸

Hyde Park's embrace of integration was, admittedly, far from absolute, a fact that would have significant repercussions for Hyde Park High. The community had an earlier history of blatant racial discrimination, and prejudice still showed through the cracks both in the school and the neighborhood. In 1908, residents formed the Hyde Park Improvement Association to prevent African Americans from moving into the area. A decade later they organized the Kenwood Property Owners Association, the 55th Street Businessmen's Association, and the Woodlawn Property Owners Association for the same purpose. These organizations worked not only to keep blacks from moving into white neighborhoods but also to keep them out of the schools (in 1918 black enrollment at Hyde Park High was six percent). Upon its creation, the 55th Street Businessmen's Association sought to remove the black students already attending Hyde Park High.¹⁹ Moreover, residential segregation was supported by the use of racially restrictive covenants — drafted, in fact, by the University of Chicago.²⁰

However, when met with the reality of increasing numbers of blacks moving into the area in the late 1940s, most community members chose

17. *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1945–1970; Leon M. Despres with Kenan Heise, *Challenging the Daley Machine: A Chicago Alderman's Memoir* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005).

18. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 137–140.

19. Philip Daniel, "A History of Discrimination Against Black Students in Chicago Secondary Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1980), 152–154.

20. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 136, 143–145.

to accept integration and discourage white residents from fleeing.²¹ In *Making the Second Ghetto*, Arnold Hirsch argues that the willingness to accept an interracial community, though aided by the “liberal” sentiments of Hyde Park-Kenwood residents, came in large part from necessity: as African Americans could now move into the Hyde Park community, the option was not between a white neighborhood and an integrated neighborhood but rather between a black neighborhood and an integrated neighborhood. The University recognized that African Americans would move into the area, but that if it could ensure that the community remain middle- and upper-middle-class, many white residents would be willing to stay.²² Thus, Hirsch maintains, support for integration was motivated by necessity rather than a genuine interest in integration: the “interracialist rhetoric” of the era was “satisfying to a liberal community in the process of reducing its nonwhite population.”²³ Hirsch’s analysis is flawed, however, because it underestimates the depth of commitment of many members of the community toward integration, for with respect to Hyde Park High School, many white residents in the area showed themselves to be open to integration.

Certainly, racism did show its face both inside and outside of the school. Several black students at Hyde Park High — especially those who attended the school in the early and mid-1950s, when the school had a large percentage of white students — remembered receiving unequal treatment from some teachers. Donald Sharp, a black student at the school from 1952 to 1956, felt that in the eyes of many teachers, he and

21. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 139.

22. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 154–162.

23. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 168.

other black students “were there but not there.”²⁴ In particular, he was mistreated in a physics class with only two black students. Sharp had attended an all-black grammar school that had not prepared him for the academic work at Hyde Park, and his teacher refused to help him catch up. Both Sharp and the other black student failed the class; Sharp believed that this was due to their race. Many other teachers were kinder, Sharp remembered, but still they built better relationships with white students than with black. Gerald Kinnard, a black student who entered the school in 1953 but dropped out before graduating, also observed inattention and disrespect to black students. Kinnard frequently clashed with teachers because he found the curriculum to be archaic; for example, there was absolutely no black history. He often challenged teachers over the curriculum, but never met with success, which made him very angry. Kinnard experienced discrimination as severe as a gym teacher threatening to take him to the basement and “beat the tar off of my skin.”²⁵ Another black student from the period, Phyllis Johnson (1955–1958), did not recall experiencing frequent racism. One exception, however, was a Spanish teacher who treated her badly, likely because of her race. Johnson took a year of Spanish from this teacher. During the first semester she struggled and failed, but during the second semester she worked extremely hard and made a lot of progress. However, when she went to talk to the teacher, rather than commending her on her progress, the teacher simply stated that she had not made enough progress and would still fail the year. After leaving high school, Johnson became fluent in Spanish; she also received a master’s and doctorate from the University of Chicago: clearly, she had a great capacity to learn that was lost upon

24. Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007.

25. Gerald Kinnard, interview by Katherine Lammers, 7 February 2007.

this teacher.²⁶ Such incidents stemming from racial prejudice seem to have declined once the school had a student body with a black majority, but were common in the early years of its integration.

Demonstrations of racism outside of the school (at least those which made it into the public record) were rare but more blatant. Muriel Beadle, whose husband was the president of the University of Chicago from 1961–68, wrote that more “conservative” members of the community “wanted to keep the community white. . . . They saw the Conference [a group dedicated to the integration of the area] as a bunch of ‘do gooders,’ ‘fuzzy-minded idealists,’ or ‘Communists.’”²⁷ In the *Hyde Park Herald*, letters to the editor complained of police officers harassing black children and white children saying “that ‘niggers’ rob, kill, and set fires.”²⁸

Such incidents, however, were inconsistent with the overall tenor of the community. Within the school, the same black students who recalled being discriminated against by teachers also had teachers who truly worked with and challenged them; with time, such teachers became more and more common.²⁹ Also, from the beginning of the school’s

26. Phyllis Johnson, interview by Katherine Lammers, 24 February 2007. Johnson recalled having faced a lot of racism in her time at the University of Chicago. In the 1970s she was at the University studying social work, and she wanted to go into research. A professor tried to discourage her, however, because “black people can’t think globally” as would be necessary to become a good researcher.

27. Muriel Beadle, *Hyde Park Kenwood Urban Renewal Years* (Copyright by Muriel Beadle, 1967), 11.

28. “Letter to the Editor,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 13 March 1963, 4; Charlotte Des Jardins, “Letter to the Editor,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 30 October 1963, 5.

29. Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007; Phyllis Johnson, interview, 24 February 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007.



Figure 1. Hyde Park High School Yearbook, *Aitchpe* 1962

Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

integration, students of different races interacted and formed strong friendships. Admittedly, divisions within the student body existed: several students from the 1950s remember students grouping themselves in fraternities and sororities that were either Jewish, black, or “gentile.”³⁰ Divisions also existed within these ethnic and racial groupings according to one’s economic and educational background, what classes one took, and where one lived.³¹ Yet divisions among the student body were not absolute, and as time wore on some lessened. For example, by the early 1960s the fraternities and sororities had largely disappeared from the

30. Stephen Treffman, interview by Katherine Lammers, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007.

31. Theautry (Pat) Appleton, interview by Katherine Lammers, 2 March 2007; Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007.

school.³² Another form of segregation took place between academic tracks (which went from “Basic” remedial classes to Double Honors), yet within the same track students of different races often became good friends, especially if they lived in the same neighborhood. In Hyde Park-Kenwood, students of different races spent time together in social clubs and camps, such as the YMCA. Sports and music groups were also important spaces where divisions began to break down. Several students recall that the a cappella choir director, Jerome Ramsfield, contributed to this process: he ensured that the a cappella choir was truly integrated and sometimes threw parties outside of school that both black and white students attended.³³ Integration was in some ways limited, as shown by the fact that parents were often kept in the dark about interracial dating. Yet strong relationships frequently formed between students of different races; many of these interracial friendships have lasted to this day.³⁴

This integration was made possible by the attitudes and actions of the Hyde Park community. While the area had a history of discrimination, it also had a history of accepting integration. In the mid-1940s, Hyde Park and Kenwood welcomed Japanese Americans fleeing the war-time persecution taking place on the West Coast. Also beginning in the 1940s, the *Hyde Park Herald* frequently announced community events promoting “brotherhood.” While “brotherhood” sometimes refer-

32. Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007.

33. Janet Jeffries, interview by Kate Lammers, 10 December 2005; Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007.

34. Jack Guthman, interview, 1 December 2005; Brenda Harrell, interview, 1 December 2005; Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007.

red to religious difference, it also included racial difference. For example, the KAM Temple and the Baptist Church held an interfaith event in February 1947 that focused on “techniques of integrating differing racial groups within a church.”³⁵

Hyde Park’s pro-integration leanings took on new life in 1950 when the creation of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference was announced.³⁶ The Conference sought “to keep whites from moving away, to welcome the new Negro residents into all community activities, and to maintain community property standards.”³⁷ While the Conference’s pragmatic stance recognized the pattern of racial turnover and sought to circumvent it, it also valued integration as a goal in and of itself. The Conference was not simply a group of white Hyde Parkers trying to assure other white Hyde Parkers that black neighbors were not all bad. Rather, the founders of the Conference were of multiple races, and the language of their founding document showed a great deal of respect for black residents. The Original Policy Statement spoke not only of whites’ fears but also of “the fear of Negroes that they may be hemmed in, that they may be unjustly excluded, unwelcome, and insecure in neighborhoods now open to them both by law and by the principles of ethics and religion.”³⁸ The Conference went on to say, “Members of all minority

35. “Brotherhood Meeting Hosted by KAM,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 February 1947, 8; Charlotte Brooks, “In the Twilight Zone between Black and White: Japanese American Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942–1945” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Mar., 2000), pp. 1,655–1,687.

36. “Community Group To Fight Residential Turnover,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 March 1950, 2.

37. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 139–140.

38. Hyde Park Kenwood Community Conference, *Original Policy Statement*

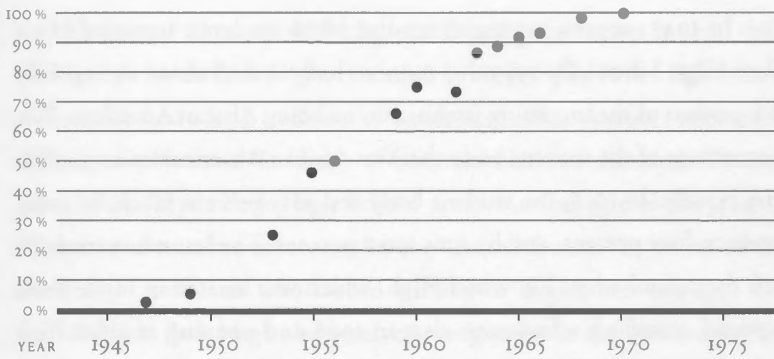


Figure 2. African-American Percentage of Student Body at Hyde Park High School

groups should be welcomed, not primarily as such, but as *persons* in their own right, with their own living interests, relationships, responsibilities, and distinctive abilities in the fields of common life and welfare.”³⁹ As the 1950s and 1960s wore on, the *Herald* displayed increasing signs of support for integration, such as community photos depicting interracial activities and letters and editorials supporting Hyde Parkers active in civil rights struggles in the South.⁴⁰

For the white parents of many Hyde Park High students, support for integration meant sending their children to a racially integrated school, and by many measures, school integration was a great success. Yet integration also failed, for once the process of integration began, the school became rapidly more black, stalling only for a few years in the 1960s at just under twenty-five percent white, as the table above shows.

(Chicago, 1949), Hyde Park Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1–2, emphasis in original.

39. *Original Policy Statement*, 3, emphasis in original.

40. *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1950–1970.

In 1947, approximately thirty-five black students attended Hyde Park High School. By 1949 this number had risen to about eighty, with 5.6 percent of the incoming freshman class being African American. The percentage of the student body that was African American continued to rise rapidly. In 1956, the student body was fifty percent black, in 1960, seventy-four percent, and by 1965, 90.8 percent. The last white students left the school when Kenwood High, which was located in Hyde Park, opened, enrolling a freshman class in 1966 and opening as a full high school in 1968. At Hyde Park High in 1968, only fifteen white students remained (one percent of the total student population), and by 1970 there were no white students in attendance.⁴¹

The rapid decline in the white student body is jarring in comparison with the story of successful integration told by former students of the school. Thus, to understand why so many whites left so quickly, particularly in the 1950s, we must take into consideration explanations that go beyond unwillingness on the part of white parents to send their children to integrated schools.

41. The data from 1947 through 1962 is unofficial, as the Board of Education did not begin to record the racial composition of the student body until 1963. To estimate racial composition prior to this year, the number of black students in each class was counted by looking at yearbook photos. The data from 1963–70 comes from more official (though not much more scientifically determined) counts carried out by the Board of Education. The missing years are due to missing yearbooks and Board of Education data. *Aitchpe* (Chicago: Hyde Park High School, 1947, 1949, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1960, 1962, 1965), Hyde Park Academy Library, Chicago; *Racial Ethnic Survey: Students*, (Chicago Board of Education, Chicago, 1964, 1968–70); *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 30 October 1963; *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago), 22 July 1965; Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, *The Factual Background of the "Hyde Park Kenwood Story": A Progress Report, 1949–1966* (Chicago), Hyde Park Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, 28; "New High School for Hyde Park," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 February 1966, 1.

Parents of all races and backgrounds had good reason to send their children to Hyde Park High. Founded in 1874, Hyde Park High School had established a long tradition of stellar academics. A report released in 1963 by the National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council stated that "Hyde Park High School ranks number one in the state of Illinois and number seventeen in the United States," in terms of the number of graduates who earned a Doctoral degree between 1957 and 1962.⁴² Hyde Park High also received recognition in the community for its excellence: for example, into the 1960s articles in the *Herald* spoke of the math team as one of the top high school math teams in the nation and mentioned that Hyde Park High received a "disproportionate share of scholarships and honors."⁴³

Students of the school during the 1950s confirmed reports of the academic excellence of the school, with some qualifications. While the quality of one's teachers could be a bit of a "grab bag," students from this period tended to remember having had at least a few — often many — excellent teachers.⁴⁴ Jack Guthman, a student at the school from 1952–56, recalled: "It was when I was there a premiere place to be in high school. . . . It was always laughed about that some of the professors [at

42. Kent, "Rev. Kent Discusses High School Problem," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 6 January 1965, 3.

43. "Schools Endorsed, Melnick Tells Art Festival," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 12 June 1963, 1; "Math Team Scores 13th In Country," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 22 January 1964, 2.

44. Ozzie Kinnard, interview by Katherine Lammers, 7 February 2007; Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Jack Guthman, interview, 1 December 2005; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007; Phyllis Johnson, interview, 24 February 2007; Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007.

the University of Chicago] would prefer Hyde Park High School . . . to the Lab School [a private school run by the University] in those days."⁴⁵ Also, as mentioned before, black students sometimes received a lower quality of teaching than their white counterparts. Yet for black students and their parents, the choice was often between Hyde Park High and an all-black public high school. Their parents chose the former because they believed the school would offer better educational opportunities and expose their children to different kinds of people and ways of life.⁴⁶ Overall, former students of all races recalled that their parents tended to be very pleased with the education they were receiving.

Accordingly, the first major blow to integration at Hyde Park High seems not to have been dissatisfaction with the school itself, but rather with the neighborhood. The large drop in white students attending the school during the early and mid-1950s coincided with large numbers of white families leaving Woodlawn, Hyde Park, and Kenwood itself. Between 1950 and 1956, 20,000 whites left Hyde Park-Kenwood and were replaced by 23,000 nonwhites, so that whites went from ninety-four percent of the population to sixty-three percent.⁴⁷ By 1960, white flight had slowed; the white population was now 32,000 of 64,000, about fifty percent. In Woodlawn, the reduction in white population was even more drastic in these ten years, dropping from 47,000 to 8,000

45. Jack Guthman, interview, 1 December 2005.

46. Craig Gilmore, interview by Katherine Lammers, 6 February 2007; Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007; Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007.

47. Valetta Press, *Hyde Park/Kenwood, a Case Study of Urban Renewal* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), Hyde Park Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, 8.

residents while the neighborhood saw an overall increase in population of 5,000 people.⁴⁸

The reasons why whites left the Hyde Park area were complex and intricately connected to the legacy of racism, but they were not due solely to that. Whites feared losing money because property values could fall as residents worried about rising crime rates and neighborhood decline. These fears took front stage in the 1950s; the rapid racial change at Hyde Park High School seems to have been due more to these issues than to concerns about the school itself.

That fears about the neighborhood were more important than fears about the school is demonstrated, first, by the fact that very little of this civic-minded community's attention and activities were focused on the schools during the 1950s. The central concerns of the neighborhood seem to have been property values and crime; schools were only brought into the limelight once the other problems were coming under control. Crime in particular grabbed the community's attention at the beginning of this era. In March 1950, the *Hyde Park Herald* reported that Hyde Park had the third highest crime rate of the forty-two police districts in the city.⁴⁹ In subsequent issues of the *Herald*, crime and the addition of police officers was a central concern addressed by the newspaper.⁵⁰ This attention to crime culminated in a community meeting in March of 1952 drawing two thousand residents. The meeting, hosted by the

48. Julian Levi, *The Neighborhood Program of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1961), Hyde Park Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, 3.

49. "Hyde Park 3rd Highest in Crime," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 March 1950, 1.

50. *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1950–52.

University of Chicago, discussed community safety concerns after the wife of a University faculty member was abducted and almost raped.⁵¹ At a subsequent meeting that May, a committee appointed at the March meeting (which later became the South East Chicago Commission, a University entity that took charge of “urban renewal” efforts during the next decade and a half) reported:

On March 27 the citizens of our community met together in this hall. Some were frightened, others were outraged by the trend in the community. Not only was crime on the increase, but the Woodlawn and Hyde Park police districts had one of the highest crime rates of any area in the city. People were afraid to be on the streets after dark. Their deep concern and righteous indignation were clearly reflected in the large gathering of the citizenry.⁵²

Crime was a major concern of Hyde Park-Kenwood residents.

Another pervasive worry for neighborhood residents was the proliferation of so-called “blighted” housing—housing which was old, poorly cared for, or overcrowded. In 1971, Valetta Press, a researcher for the University of Chicago, wrote: “Community residents, both in and out of the University circles, perceived major threats to the community—afflicted by aging, neglected buildings, increased congestion, a rising

51. Press, *Hyde Park/Kenwood*, 8.

52. Levi, *The Neighborhood Program*, 4. While the University may have been more than willing to exaggerate the strength of concern among residents as an excuse to enter the community development fray, it is doubtful that they would have been so bold as to fabricate statements of a group of citizens and then repeat this fabrication back to the very same people.

crime rate, and a proliferation of bars (twenty-three long five blocks of 55th Street alone).⁵³ The community's buildings were in fact aging quite a bit: in 1950, sixty-four percent had been built before 1920, including a significant amount of commercial property that was built at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.⁵⁴ Residents thus had a real reason to worry about the physical upkeep of their neighborhood. This fear was compounded by concern about houses being converted into kitchenette apartments, creating higher population density with less-than-desirable inhabitants — this was seen as an “invasion” threatening the middle-class status of the neighborhoods.⁵⁵ These concerns and fears about crime threatened to cause property values to drop, and this threat became the focus of the community's attention.

Preoccupation with housing issues — rather than school issues — was also apparent in panic-edged *Hyde Park Herald* articles asserting the desirability of the neighborhood. For example, a February 1, 1945 front page article carried the title, “Our ‘Near South Side’ Can Be a Homeland Eden if Chicagoans Act Now!,” while a February 15 article asserted, “This system [of neighborhood turnover] must be checked if we are to prevent ever mounting economic loss in depreciation of property values. . . . Don't surrender. Don't run away. Stand on the threshold of your home and fight to protect it.”⁵⁶ While schools were occasionally discussed in the paper during this period, they were rarely given either the

53. Press, *Hyde Park/Kenwood*, 8.

54. Press, *Hyde Park/Kenwood*, 7.

55. Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, *This is Hyde Park-Kenwood: Past, Present, Future* (June 1959), Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, 5.

56. “James J. Carroll's Forecast of the Future of HP and the O-K Districts,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 15 February 1945, 1, 6.

coverage space or sense of urgency afforded to issues of crime and especially housing and urban renewal.

Similarly, both the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference and the Southeast Chicago Commission focused the vast majority of their efforts on housing and safety issues rather than education. This indicates that they perceived the primary threat to be not school integration but neighborhood integration and the accompanying threat of lowered property values. Many residents were unwilling to live in the same block as black residents. For example, the HPKCC met significant resistance from white residents when it tried to implement a Tenant Referral program that would help direct whites looking for housing into blocks with higher percentages of blacks and vice versa. In an internal report to the Conference, Leslie T. Pennington noted:

It is significant that some people have opposed Tenant Referral for fear it might in time help introduce Negroes into all white areas in our community. . . . They may concede . . . the ideal of a "physically attractive, non-discriminatory, well-serviced community where people of similar standards may live" for the community as a whole, but only in so far as it does not threaten the particular "white island" in which they live with invasion by any Negro.⁵⁷

It is especially significant that the University threw all of its efforts behind residential issues. The University saw itself as fighting for its very survival, for if Hyde Park became too black, poor, or dangerous, highly

57. Leslie T. Pennington, "Suggestions from LTP on Tenant Referral and Education for living in an Interracial Community" (Chicago: Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, 27 June 1957), Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

talented faculty and students would flee the University.⁵⁸ In the May 1952 speech mentioned earlier, the presenting committee stated: "The University of Chicago has a deep interest and a tremendous stake in our community. We are here to stay, and we are dedicated to the kind of community that is appropriate for our faculty members and our students."⁵⁹ While the University did give some attention to the schools — for example, in 1957 the University announced plans to significantly increase the spaces for students at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools — its efforts with regards to the schools did not begin to parallel the amount of energy and resources put into urban renewal plans meant to control the physical (and through the physical, the class) characteristics of the neighborhood.⁶⁰ Given the stakes, if the University was willing to put all its weight behind the idea that the central threat to the neighborhood was residential issues rather than school issues, there was probably a certain amount of truth in this assumption.

When it comes to the question of why in the 1950s there was such rapid racial change at Hyde Park High School, one of the main answers is that many students left the school simply because their families moved away to protect their savings or escape crime, rather than to specifically escape the schools. Indeed, Hyde Park High alumni from the early- to mid-1950s tended to see white flight from the area as the biggest cause of loss of white students in the school.⁶¹ Such flight was, of course, fueled

58. Hirsch, *Making of the Second Ghetto*.

59. Levi, *The Neighborhood Program*, 7.

60. "University High Aims at 1,000 Enrollment," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 14 March 1957, 1.

61. Jack Guthman, interview, 1 December 2005; Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007.

by racist beliefs about black tenants and homeowners, but this does not mean that every family that left was racist, for a family could feel very much under threat by looming loss of property values without subscribing to a belief that black neighbors were worse than white. Again, racism provides only part of the explanation, as residents faced enormous pressures over which they had little personal control.

Yet, while white flight was probably the primary reason white students left the school, it was by no means the only reason. While many parents were satisfied with the school, others were not, as is evidenced in the growth of private schools during the period. It is not clear at what rate private school enrollment grew, but growth certainly happened. For one thing, the University of Chicago decided to expand its Laboratory Schools to allow more students to enroll. Also, students at Hyde Park High recalled hearing about classmates who left the school to enter private schools nearby (usually the Lab Schools).⁶² By the mid-1960s, a large percentage of students in the area were attending private schools. One letter-writer to the *Herald* claimed in 1965 that of 6,000 high school age students in Hyde Park High School's district, only 4,100 attended the high school, meaning that almost one-third were attending private school.⁶³

These students did not leave Hyde Park High because their families moved. Nor did they leave simply because of racism: their parents chose to stay in the Hyde Park area after it became integrated, demonstrating at least some comfort with African Americans. Community-wide comfort with racial integration was also evident in the largely positive student

62. Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007.

63. McKim Marriott, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 6 January 1965, 4.

relations within the school. There was, however, a type of integration that the community showed itself to be deeply unwilling to accept, and this type of integration proved to be the undoing of Hyde Park High. This was integration by class.

Hyde Park and Kenwood developed a strong focus on limiting the number of lower income residents in their neighborhoods, as is blatantly apparent in the urban renewal activities of the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁴ “Urban renewal” efforts were spearheaded by the University of Chicago’s South East Chicago Commission (SECC)—the group that grew out of the community-wide meetings about safety issues in the early 1950s. By clearing areas of “blight” and reducing the population of the area as a whole, the SECC was able to alleviate fears that an integrated community also meant a lower-class community. The success of these urban renewal efforts was evident in the slowing of white flight after the mid-1950s. Hyde Park was once famously described as “black and white, shoulder to shoulder, united against the poor.”⁶⁵ In other words, Hyde Park and Kenwood were able to survive as racially integrated communities once they were assured of remaining largely middle-class and upper-class.

Hyde Park High School, therefore, was not able to survive as an integrated school because it was not able to control the class of its students or the class characteristics of Woodlawn, the neighborhood it was located in. Specifically, over the twenty years that Hyde Park High was an integrated school, the class backgrounds of its black students shifted. Many of the first black residents moving to Woodlawn, Hyde Park, and

64. Woodlawn was not included in the urban renewal plans.

65. David Forbes, “My Life as a Mind, Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb University,” *University of Chicago Magazine* (Chicago), April 2002.

Kenwood were middle- and upper-middle-class blacks (a fair few were wealthier than their white counterparts).⁶⁶ Middle-class blacks were, however, by no means the only blacks attending the school; all three neighborhoods, especially northern Kenwood and Woodlawn, began to receive greater numbers of low income black residents whose children attended the high school. Also, interviews with former students suggest that several students lived outside of the school's boundaries but forged addresses to be eligible to attend the school. Some, maybe most, of these students were from poor black families, whose parents were determined to give them access to a good education. Thus, by the mid-1950s, many poor black students attended the school: Donald Sharp estimated that when he was at Hyde Park in the mid 1950s, black students from lower-class backgrounds were more common than black students whose parents were well-educated professionals. While it is nearly impossible to pinpoint the moment when middle-class blacks became the minority, throughout the 1950s they seem to have been shrinking proportionally to lower-class blacks, and they were definitely surpassed by the 1960s.⁶⁷

The growing number of low income African-American students in the school concerned parents of other students; this concern, as tempting as it is to paint it so, was not simply based on prejudice. A key problem

66. Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007; Theautry (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007.

67. *Local Community Factbook: Chicago Metropolitan Area 1960*, Eds. Evelyn M. Kitagawa and Karl E. Taueber, Chicago Community Inventory, University of Chicago (Chicago, 1963); *Community Fact Sheets*, Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference (Chicago), Hyde Park Historical Society Collection, Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago; Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007; Gerald Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007; Ozzie Kinnard, interview, 7 February 2007.

facing urban schools at this time was the poor education and skill levels of black students who had migrated from the South. Even as migration levels slowed, the inequalities that stemmed from this disparity in education background helped to create an entrenched system of unequal education for blacks.⁶⁸ This inequality was reinforced by the policies of the Chicago Public Schools. Although black and white schools in Chicago offered a roughly equal quality of education before the 1920s (as well as being more integrated), after World War I both segregation and unequal treatment of black students increased. In particular, the Chicago School Board made decisions to explicitly lower the standards expected of students in African-American schools and to systematically underfund these schools.⁶⁹ Therefore, children in black families moving into the Hyde Park-Kenwood area, as well as Woodlawn, often arrived with an inferior educational background. For example, Donald Sharp and Constance Howard both felt unprepared for the level of academic work when they first arrived at Hyde Park High.⁷⁰

As Hyde Park High School received ever increasing numbers of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds (corresponding to lower-class economic backgrounds), it found itself facing difficulties providing a quality education to all of its students. Teachers at Hyde Park High were now having to teach a student body new to the school; for some long-term teachers, this task proved daunting. So daunting, in fact,

68. Vincent P. Franklin, "The Persistence of School Segregation in the Urban North: An Historical Perspective" *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 1 (Winter 1974), 51–68.

69. Michael Homel, *Down from Equality: Black Chicagoans and the Public Schools, 1920–41* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), x.

70. Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February 2007.

that the school went through a couple of waves of mass retirements after becoming integrated.⁷¹ Also, the school's administration and teachers seem to have focused a disproportionate degree of effort on maintaining the quality of the top academic tracks, probably to maintain white and black middle-class interest in the school. A letter writer to the *Herald* in October of 1964 charged: "From a conversation I held with a counselor at Hyde Park, I get the distinct impression that everything possible is being poured into the top tracks in an attempt to maintain those programs and that the high school will do everything it can to get the top students to enroll in Hyde Park."⁷² Jay Mulberry, who taught at the school for one year in 1965, claimed that most teachers did not want to teach basic level classes, and Timuel Black, a well-known Chicago historian and local activist who taught at the school from 1960–1966, remembered teachers putting much less effort into their lower level courses. Additionally, the lower level classes were generally given to new, inexperienced teachers. This trend, of course, was not universal: Jay Mulberry also recalled there being a "great many excellent teachers" who sought to overcome the new challenges by facing them with real enthusiasm and sense of purpose.⁷³ Alice Mulberry, who taught at the school from 1963–1968, and Nina Robinson, a Hyde Park teacher from 1962–1987, both remembered belonging to groups of teachers—both white and black—who were mentored by Timuel Black on how to

71. Stephen Treffman, interview, 27 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007; Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007.

72. Sonya Gutman, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 21 October 1964, 4–5.

73. Jay Mulberry, interview by Katherine Lammers, 27 February 2007.

more effectively teach students coming from poor rural and urban backgrounds.⁷⁴ Many teachers at the school made a sincere effort to learn how to teach students from widely varying demographic backgrounds.

Yet on the whole, Hyde Park High students from lower income backgrounds faced discrimination and decreased educational opportunities when compared with their wealthier and whiter peers. One problem was that poorer students did not receive high quality counseling in terms of what classes to take and how to shape their academics.⁷⁵ Constance Howard, a black student at the school from 1956–1960, felt that for the most part black and white students were treated equally within the classroom. However, with the advent of the five-track system, Howard noticed that black students—especially black students who hadn't gone to the more prestigious elementary schools—tended to be tracked lower than white students.⁷⁶ The Double Honors track came into existence while Howard was at the school, and this track served mostly white students through the mid-1960s; by 1965, a student at the school wrote a letter to the editor of the *Herald* estimating that fifty percent of the students in her honors classes were white, as were eighty-five percent in her double honors classes.⁷⁷ In Howard's words, the track may have been created because whites "felt that we were holding them

74. Nina Robinson, interview by Katherine Lammers, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007.

75. Donald Sharp, interview, 16 February 2007; Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Constance Howard, interview, 13 February, 2007; Phyllis Johnson, interview, 24 February 2007.

76. Constance Howard, interview, 13 February 2007.

77. Jane S. Goldwin, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 24 March 1965, 5; Howard.

back.⁷⁸ This trend was so forceful, recalled Timuel Black, a teacher at the school from 1960–66, that black students from less advantaged backgrounds would sometimes not be given the opportunity to take classes that they were prepared for if the spaces were needed for white students. In particular, he remembered an incident involving a friend of his daughter, who was a student at the school at the same time he taught there. His daughter's friend was forced to retake a biology class that she had already taken in eighth grade, even though she was qualified for a more advanced class.⁷⁹ The Double Honors track may have been created to make white parents (as well as, perhaps, wealthy or professional black parents) more comfortable sending their children to an increasingly black and lower-class school.

Discrimination against poorer students also went beyond unfair tracking practices. Pat Appleton, a black student who attended the school from 1956–59, felt that teachers discriminated against students who were poor and not particularly academically inclined. According to Appleton, students who were middle-class or came from the strong primary schools of Hyde Park-Kenwood were treated with respect whether they were black or white. However, students who were poor and black (urban renewal by the early 1960s had eliminated most of the poor white population) were automatically held in a certain amount of suspicion, unless they proved themselves academically and became well-known to the teachers. This suspicion meant, for example, that small rules would be enforced unevenly; students in honors classes could get away with a

78. Constance Howard, interview, 13 February 2007.

79. Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007. Despite the trouble she had enrolling in the correct class, it ought to be noted, she grew up to become a highly successful, prominent physician.

lot more than students in remedial classes.⁸⁰ Timuel Black recalled that he often advised students subject to such harassment to lay low because fighting back was not worth getting kicked out of school. Black believed that the administration actively looked for ways to expel such students. A particularly striking incident involved a group of poor black students on whose behalf he often intervened with the administration. Over a weekend in which he left Chicago to attend a conference, the school administration took the opportunity to expel this group of students, who included Jeff Fort, the future founder of the Blackstone Rangers (a gang which grew incredibly powerful in Woodlawn during the following decade).⁸¹

The combined disadvantages for poor students of inferior educational background and discrimination at Hyde Park High led to problems such as a rising dropout rate. By the mid-1960s the dropout rate was very high: in one *Herald* article it was estimated to be sixty percent. In the newspaper, this figure was soon challenged and lowered. In addition, Nina Robinson, a former teacher, pointed out that such figures were misleading because they counted all students who left the school for any reason as dropouts, even if the students had transferred and finished school elsewhere.⁸² Nonetheless, the increase in dropouts compared to earlier years demonstrates that the school was struggling to provide a strong education to all of its students.

Not all parents from more advantaged backgrounds were insensitive to the needs of these students. Nina Robinson and Alice Mulberry remembered a group of parents who were extremely dedicated to the

80. Theautry (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007.

81. Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007.

82. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 9 December 1964, 4; *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1964-5; Nina Robinson, interview, 27 February 2007.

school and to the success of all its students, not just privileged students.⁸³ Likewise, a statement delivered by the Hyde Park PTA to the school board on December 15, 1964 demonstrated genuine concern for the achievement of all students. The statement called for more and better resources for students with low reading skills, a volunteer program to bring more resources into the school and increase community-school interaction, better programs to bring highly-qualified social workers to the school, programs to find “new and creative” ways to address the relationship between the school and students’ homes, and expansion of the school’s availability to the community at large.⁸⁴ Therefore, it seems that, while great inequality did exist within the school, several parents were also working to make the school better for all of its students.

The efforts of these parents and dedicated teachers, however, could not match the disadvantages facing the school. While the racial turnover at the school paused for a couple of years in the early 1960s (with about twenty-five percent of the student body white), it soon slipped again to land at about a ten percent white student body. Of course, white parents who continued to send their children to Hyde Park High with a large majority of African-American classmates were comfortable with integration and willing to live the ideals of racial equality. Yet such parents were not representative of the entire community, and by the mid-1960s the school and community had reached a crisis point that would convince the community to build a new high school located in Hyde Park, thus excluding students from the increasingly lower income and African-

83. Nina Robinson, interview, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007.

84. “Hyde Park High School Statement at the Public Hearings on Board of Education Budget,” Hyde Park High School PTA (Chicago, 15 December 1964), private collection of Anita Bentley Williams.

American neighborhood of Woodlawn.

In 1964, a debate on the perceived crisis facing Hyde Park High School exploded in the community. This debate lasted until the decision to build Kenwood High was made in 1966, and while it raged it absorbed an enormous amount of attention. For example, in a span of two weeks in early 1965, the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference held a series of twenty-four public meetings to discuss the issue.⁸⁵ For two years, scarcely a week would pass without either a major article or letter in the *Hyde Park Herald* addressing the issue of the schools, with the greatest share of attention being placed on Hyde Park High. This attention differed markedly from that given the schools in the 1950s, when school problems were treated as a small component in the overall urban renewal schema. By the mid-1960s, however, writers in the *Herald* were declaring the schools to be the key to the ultimate success of the urban renewal project and a stable integrated community.

Articles and letters in the *Herald* revealed a fear of losing Hyde Park's middle-class, both white and black. A letter to the editor in July 1964 decried

Another family of friends moves to the suburbs. A neighbor applies to private schools for the son entering high school. An acquaintance whose two eldest children graduated from Hyde Park is reluctantly sending the third one there on a trial basis. A new man at the office coming from another city would like to live in Hyde Park "except for the schools." The lab school tells a non-faculty friend who has one child there that the next younger one cannot be accepted because of the number of faculty children

85. "Public Meeting Held on High School Issue," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 24 March 1965, 1.

who must be accommodated; he goes to another private school for the moment but they plan to move. A new private school has been opened in Hyde Park-Kenwood recently. Meetings are being held to discuss organization of another one. . . . With those families gone, child-rearing Hyde Park will consist, on the one hand, of families relieved of the necessity to choose by privilege or high income, and on the other hand, of families who cannot afford good education here or anywhere else.⁸⁶

A week later, a letter written by a family that was leaving the neighborhood ended with

We bequeath Hyde Park to the childless, [the] high-income families who can afford private schools, the lip-service integrationists who do not 'live' integration, and the wonderful, wonderful practical idealists who are trying to preserve the spirit of Hyde Park but who we think are fighting a losing battle.⁸⁷

Reverend Kent, a local clergyman, went so far as to state that "all of us must know that the future of Hyde Park and Kenwood and Woodlawn, and I would be willing to say the Southeast part of the city of Chicago, rests upon our decisions about Hyde Park High School."⁸⁸ Clearly, as the writer of the first letter went on to state, the public schools of the neighborhood had become unacceptable to a large portion of Hyde

86. Mr. and Mrs. Lambert S. Botts, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 8 July 1964, 4-5.

87. "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 15 July 1964, 8.

88. Kent, "Rev. Kent Discusses High School Problem," 6 January 1965.

Park-Kenwood residents. In fact, in 1965 writers to the *Herald* claimed that there were 2,500 white students in the area attending private high schools instead of Hyde Park High.⁸⁹ This assertion was supported by another figure indicating that many students attended private schools: in 1960, Hyde Park had roughly 4,000 more residents than Woodlawn (64,000 versus 60,000), yet in August 1964 it was estimated that the upcoming freshman class at Hyde Park High would have 1,800 students, only 400 of which would come from Hyde Park-Kenwood.⁹⁰

Writers to the *Herald* commonly complained of overcrowding at the school; race and quality were also often mentioned. Hidden from the discussion, however, were two of the most important reasons Hyde Park and Kenwood decided to abandon Hyde Park High: class and violence. The Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference created a list of Hyde Park High's problems that was strongly endorsed by the editors of the *Hyde Park Herald*, though not by all of its readers. The Conference's list had three items: "The first is the lack of integration (eight percent white); second, the overcrowding which promises to be worse next year by an anticipated 300 to 400 more students; and, third, some weaknesses in the approach to the lower tracks."⁹¹ Of these three problems, overcrowding was the most frequently mentioned and strongly emphasized in articles and letters in the *Herald*.

By the mid-1960s, Hyde Park High School truly was overcrowded. According to Chicago Public Schools Superintendent Benjamin C. Willis, Hyde Park High School was built to accommodate about 2,400 students. In 1964, the enrollment was 4,100 students, almost twice the number

89. Marriott, "Letter to the Editor," 6 January 1965.

90. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 26 August 1964, 4.

91. "Budget Hearing," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 23 December 1964, 1.

the school was supposed to handle.⁹² This increase was credited to the post-World War II baby boom by Frances Bentley, the Hyde Park High PTA president until 1965.⁹³ Bentley described the overcrowded situation as

Nearly non-functionable. 900 kids (30 divisions) who are supposed to meet in Loomis are homeless because of current repairs in there which have the hall shut down entirely. Divisions are meeting anywhere they can be put down. . . . Everyone is tense and overworked and unable to get caught up with [the] workload.⁹⁴

To handle the extra students, mobile units were set up, and the school began to transfer some students to other schools such as the Chicago Vocational School. The possibilities for transferring students were limited, though, since all but two high schools in Chicago were full past 100 percent of their official capacity; some schools were even worse off than Hyde Park High, operating at more than double their capacity.⁹⁵

Yet the problems created by the overcrowding may have been exaggerated and overemphasized. When a CPS assistant superintendent proposed to build a new facility in Hyde Park-Kenwood, the Herald praised the plan, stating, "Just room to breathe for all our high school students would accomplish much for quality education."⁹⁶ Yet students

92. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 December 1964.

93. Frances Bentley, *Kenwood Academy and How It Came to Be*, from private collection of Anita Bentley Williams.

94. Frances Bentley, *Untitled notes*, from private collection of Anita Bentley Williams.

95. William Bentley, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 September 1964, 4.

96. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 14 April 1965, 4.

at the time, while remembering that the school was crowded, did not tend to feel that this significantly impacted the quality of their education. For example, Anita Peterson pointed out that while the school was very crowded, the negative impact of the overcrowding was counterbalanced by the fact that lecture was a more common form of instruction than in today's schools. Likewise, Janet Jeffries recalled significant overcrowding but still felt that she received an excellent education.⁹⁷

Furthermore, the 1960s was not the first time the school had been significantly overcrowded. Reverend Kent reported, "I am told by the head of the PTA that when you read the old minutes of the PTA you find them talking about overcrowding, obtaining sufficient teachers, and building classroom space. Apparently these have been long-standing problems with this school."⁹⁸ One letter-writer even contended that at one point in time Hyde Park High had had an enrollment of over 5,000.⁹⁹ Whether this claim was an exaggeration or not, it is clear that the high school had previously survived overcrowding; only when the school was overcrowded with lower income black students was this seen as a crisis severe enough to merit the building of a new school. Craig Gilmore, a black student who attended the school from 1964–1968, noted, "I guess there could be an argument made that one of the reasons was to alleviate overcrowding. But they placed that high school squarely in Hyde Park-Kenwood. I don't think that was an accident."¹⁰⁰ Over-

97. Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007; Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007; Brenda Harrell, interview, 1 December 2005; Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007; Janet Jeffries, interview, 10 December 2005.

98. Kent, "Rev. Kent Discusses High School Problem," 6 January 1965.

99. Leo Macarow, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 10 February 1965, 5.

100. Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007.

crowding, while a real problem at the school, seems to have been used more as an excuse to build Kenwood High than to have been a true motivation.

The other two problems cited by the Conference were lack of racial balance and low quality education for the lower tracks at the school. Surely, both of these issues had an impact: the latter was clearly a real problem facing the school, and the large black majority in the school must have played a role in discouraging white parents from sending their children to the school. The discussion of these issues, however, served to obscure the roles that class and violence played in making Hyde Parkers uncomfortable with the school.

The discussion of race in particular helped to hide the community's discomfort with low-income families and students. By the time the controversy over what to do about the high school arose, white students made up a little less than ten percent of the student body, with African Americans making up just under ninety percent. The community had already tried to limit the number of black students enrolling in the school by moving the northern boundary south to exclude parts of Kenwood that had become all black. According to Pat Appleton, during his years at the school the Northern boundary was first moved south to 47th Street as Northern Kenwood underwent racial turnover, and was secondly moved further south to 51st Street as South Kenwood also became blacker.¹⁰¹ Despite changing the border, however, the school was unable to stop the increase in black students and was now faced with a black majority.

To some, the fact that any white students at all remained at a school so largely African American was virtually miraculous. Robert J. Havighurst, a University of Chicago professor who had created recom-

101. Theaury (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007.

mentations for how to achieve widespread integration in the Chicago Public Schools, found the continued presence of whites in the school to be extremely remarkable.¹⁰² Others, however, challenged this perception and the related belief that Hyde Park High parents sent their children to the school simply to fight for the ideal of integration. Frances Bentley wrote:

Not all the white parents whose children go to Hyde Park High are 'fighting for their firm conviction in a public school system.' Most of us are sending our children to Hyde Park just because we are firmly convinced that they are getting at that school the very best possible high school education we can obtain for them anywhere.¹⁰³

Furthermore, some white students at the school recalled that their parents were deeply committed in particular to the ideal of public education. Sometimes this belief was combined with the financial inability to send their children to private school or to move, but this does not negate the fact that these parents believed in public education.¹⁰⁴ For many white or middle-class parents, loyalty to the school was about much more than just dedication to the ideal of integration.

Yet, for many people, all of these motives combined could not outweigh the fear conjured by a ninety percent African-American school. A group of parents who began meeting in 1964 to discuss the school's

102. "We Reiterate Our Position," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 December 1964, 4.

103. Frances Bentley, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 9 December 1964, 4-5.

104. Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007; Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007.

problems asserted that racial imbalance caused the school to be undesirable to both black and white middle-class families.¹⁰⁵ An editorial from December 1964 asserted: "We cannot realistically expect white parents to develop enthusiasm for sending their children to a high school which has only a nine percent white ratio in its student body, just because the school buildings are new."¹⁰⁶ In a November 1964 letter, one woman accused the community of making the assumption that once a school was majority black, its quality would decrease.¹⁰⁷ Certainly the preponderance of black students kept several families from sending their children to the school.

Missing initially from this debate, however, was an acknowledgment that much of the discomfort with Hyde Park High came not only from the race of the students but also, more importantly, from their class backgrounds. As the debate continued, class issues began to be covertly mentioned. In the same letter that accused Hyde Parkers of seeing majority-black schools as inferior, the author skirted the issue of class at Hyde Park High. She first mentioned that "We see from the Havighurst report that there is usually high correlation between economic level and school attainment;" then she noted that Hyde Park-Kenwood was "on a higher than average economic scale, because it is composed of so many professional people, of all colors," but in the end she neglected to also point out Woodlawn's growing poverty.¹⁰⁸ An editorial from about a month later also just barely touched the issue when it reported: "We know that there

105. "School Group Forms," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 12 August 1964, 1.

106. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 9 December 1964, 4.

107. Anna C. Kim, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 18 November 1964, 4.

108. Kim, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald*, 18 November 1964.

are children with educational disabilities in Hyde Park-Kenwood. . . . Unfortunately there are many more in Woodlawn."¹⁰⁹

With time, though, references to class at Hyde Park High became overt. In a February, 1965 letter to the editor, Leo Macarow reported:

At several of the meetings sponsored by the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference last week . . . it was pointed out that the present situation constitutes a crisis because of the 'underprivileged' youngsters at the school. At one meeting it was stated that these same underprivileged elements felt that 'there is nothing there for me' and it was further implied that the reason why parents of some 2000 eligible white high school age students in this area do not send their children to Hyde Park is because of the presence of this type of student.¹¹⁰

Similarly, two parents wrote in to reject a plan to expand Hyde Park High School. This plan, known as the "campus plan," was one of the most popular proposals for fixing the problems of the school. These parents objected because the plan

offers no solution to the present socio-economic imbalance. This is unfortunate because this imbalance is the major concern of many middle-class whites and Negroes who would like to send their children to a public high school, but who have serious reservations about Hyde Park High. . . . The present inadequacy of the programs in the lower tracks is not the reason

109. "Editorial," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 9 December 1964, 4.

110. Macarow, "Letter to the Editor," 10 February 1965.

middle-class whites and Negroes are not going to Hyde Park High. The main reason is the vast socio-economic disparity, which will not be significantly narrowed merely by remedial programs at the high school level.¹¹¹

Of course, when community members spoke of problems having to do with a "socio-economic imbalance" or "underprivileged" children, they may have to a certain extent been using class as a code for race; yet classism as just a mask for racism fails to sufficiently explain what was happening. As already mentioned, there was the often very positive experience students had with racial integration at the school; it seems that students who grew up in Hyde Park and Kenwood did grow up in a genuinely interracial environment. Also, at the same time that problems in the high school were being discussed in the *Herald*, problems with the elementary schools were also being brought forward. However, the elementary schools, which were not located in Woodlawn and drew from an overall wealthier population, were never treated with the same sense of urgency or importance as the high school.¹¹²

Indeed, the earlier and more often repeated emphasis on the "racial imbalance" at the school may have been an instance of using race to mask class rather than vice versa. Through choosing to continue living in the area after it became integrated and in many cases sending their children to integrated public schools (and, it should be noted, many of the private schools were also somewhat integrated), white Hyde Parkers had shown that they were willing to try to stop exercising their

111. Robert and Jean Solomon, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 24 February 1965, 4.

112. *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1964-66.

race privilege. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the urban renewal efforts betrayed a strong desire to not associate with the poor. Indeed, many wealthier black families ended up leaving Hyde Park High and attending private schools like the university's Lab Schools.¹¹³ It follows, then, that Hyde Parkers tended to be more reticent in public media such as the *Herald* about their still very real class prejudices and privilege than about racism, which they were already working to address and change; and thus it seems that prejudice against *lower-class* African Americans, rather than all African Americans, was a prime motivation for whites leaving the school.

The difficulties the community faced in dealing with race and class issues were exacerbated by the lack of support from the Chicago Public Schools. As already mentioned, CPS had systematically undermined all-black schools for decades, and had thus helped create the inequality in education backgrounds that plagued the school. More immediately, Superintendent Willis refused to take actions to integrate the Chicago school district as a whole, which left Hyde Park to battle to make integration work on its own. In fact, Chicago was so defiant of school desegregation requirements that it came under investigation by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1965; the charges were dropped only when Mayor Daley complained personally to President Johnson.¹¹⁴ Hyde Parkers expressed great frustration with Willis; by the time he was up for rehire, the Hyde Park PTA, the elementary PTAs, the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, Dr. Havighurst and Dr. Hauser (two prominent local experts on school desegregation), Hyde

113. Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007; Theautry (Pat) Appleton, interview, 2 March 2007; Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007.

114. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston*, 8.

Park's elected officials, and the editor of the *Hyde Park Herald* had all called for him to be fired.¹¹⁵ Hyde Park had reason to be upset: the lack of a citywide desegregation plan meant that Hyde Park High had a disproportionate share of black students and lower income students; it also meant that the school lacked opportunities to learn from the experience of other desegregated schools. Hyde Park High School was left to fight a battle for successful integration on its own even though the problems it confronted arose from histories and policies over which it had little control.

Combined with this lack of support, race and class issues had driven many Hyde Parkers (both black and white) from Hyde Park High School and had driven the community as a whole to think of the school as in crisis. Nonetheless, a small corps of white students continued to attend the school through the mid-1960s. This group was willing to go to a school with a majority of black and lower income students, and for several years its members defended Hyde Park High against criticisms and proposals to build a new high school in Hyde Park. However, by the late 1960s even some of these staunch advocates for Hyde Park High abandoned their position, and when Kenwood was built, all of the remaining white students transferred to the new school. A new problem had convinced even this steadfast group of families to abandon Hyde Park High.

This problem was violence. During the 1960s, Woodlawn experienced a sharp increase in gang violence, a result of the creation of the Blackstone Rangers. Students and teachers who attended or worked at the school during the 1960s claimed that this rise in violence was probably the most important factor that caused Hyde Park and Kenwood to abandon

115. *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 1964–65.

the school and build another.¹¹⁶ Founded in the early 1960s by Jeff Fort, a former Hyde Park High student expelled under dubious circumstances as described by Timuel Black, the Blackstone Rangers started simply as a group of young men who hung out on Blackstone Avenue. Their transformation and growth was prodigious: by 1971, the gang claimed 4,500 members and “controlled almost the entire South Side.”¹¹⁷ The Rangers began their growth by taking control of Woodlawn and shaking down local businesses for “protection.” Because of this intimidation and the changing demographics of the neighborhood, 63rd Street, which had only a decade earlier been a booming economic and cultural center, was abandoned. Adding to the damage, during and after the rise of the Rangers a significant portion of Woodlawn was burned and demolished in a series of fires. Black middle-class families moved out of the neighborhood.¹¹⁸ Woodlawn was quickly becoming an impoverished, underpopulated, and violent area.

The effect of the violence on Hyde Park High School was somewhat indirect. While interviews with former students indicated that violence in the school grew from the 1950s to the 1960s, students and teachers from the 1960s believed that violence within the school was manageable. An example of violence within the school included boys being shaken down for lunch money when they went to the bathroom. Carey Horowitz remembered, however, that he and other white students

116. Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007; Nina Robinson, interview, 27 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Janet Jeffries, interview, 10 December 2005.

117. Richard T. Sale, *The Blackstone Rangers: A Reporter's Account of Time Spent with the Street Gang on Chicago's South Side* (New York: Random House, 1971), 16.

118. Sale, Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007; Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007.

coming from South Shore were told that if they did not give in, they were not likely to actually be hurt and would be left alone in the future. Horowitz took this advice and found it to be true. Horowitz was, however, once involved in a fight along racial lines when a black student knocked him down and said to him, "I'm a black and you're a gray and I don't like grays."¹¹⁹ This incident seems to have been representative of most of the violence occurring within the school: isolated and not too severe.

The school's real problems with violence, then, occurred outside of the school as gangs harassed students walking to and from school each day, especially targeting black students for gang recruitment. White students were given a pass on gang recruitment efforts and thus, it seems, the more threatening kinds of violence, yet they sometimes were harassed. Once, Anita Peterson, a white student, was walking home and a group of girls shouted out to her, "Hey girl, are you black or white?" Despite this, she felt fairly safe in the school, and she never felt threatened enough to stop walking home by herself.¹²⁰ The threats and violence affected black students much more severely. Craig Gilmore, a black student from this period, recalled being heavily recruited by gangs, especially after 1965. Gilmore felt so threatened that many days he did not come to school. However, his teachers encouraged him to keep coming, and he graduated as a successful student. Yet many other black students, according to Timuel Black, left the school to avoid the threats. Unfortunately, many students were also recruited into the gangs. Black

119. Carey Horowitz, interview, 8 March 2007.

120. Anita Peterson, interview, 14 February 2007. Hyde Park–Kenwood students had an advantage because they could choose to ride a bus that dropped them off directly in front of the school rather than face the perils of walking.

recalled that he lost more students on the streets of Woodlawn to gang violence than he did to the Vietnam War.¹²¹

While the threat of violence seems to have been most intense for black students who lived in Woodlawn and couldn't ride the bus to school, the overall rise in violence greatly alarmed parents of all the school's students.¹²² In particular, parents from outside of Woodlawn (who tended to be wealthier than those in Woodlawn) were afraid to send their children into the increasingly dangerous neighborhood. Middle-class parents who had thus far been willing to send their children to a majority black and largely socioeconomically disadvantaged school, and possibly would have continued to send their children to the school for years to come had violence not been on the rise, began to search for other schools.

Oddly, violence was largely absent from the discussions of the "high school problem" in the *Herald* prior to the opening of Kenwood High. Only a few small references to Woodlawn's problems with violence crept into the paper as the community tried to decide whether to stick with Hyde Park High. Some writers referred simply to the fear people felt with regard to the Woodlawn neighborhood: a criticism of the school being "poorly located" carried such overtones.¹²³ An article reporting on one of the Conference's community meetings on the high school in early 1965 recounted:

121. Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007.

122. Craig Gilmore, interview, 6 February 2007; Timuel Black, interview, 5 March 2007; Nina Robinson, interview, 27 February 2007; Jay Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Alison Mulberry, interview, 27 February 2007; Brenda Harrell, interview, 1 December 2005; Janet Jeffries, interview, 10 December 2005.

123. Kent, "Rev. Kent Discusses High School Problem," 6 January 1965.

There was a heated discussion of the safety problem. Louis Novar, who identified himself as a Wilson Junior College teacher, insisted that white children did not go the washrooms except in pairs out of fear. Timuel Black, 5059 Ellis, a Hyde Park High teacher and Mrs. Asher denied that.¹²⁴

The *Herald* may have chosen to omit stronger references to violence at and around Hyde Park High because frequent mentions of violence and crime could threatened to destabilize the community if no other public high school options were available.

Once Kenwood High was in the works, however, the role of violence began to be discussed. Early in 1966 the school board, in the hopes of alleviating overcrowding at Hyde Park High, created an option for students to transfer to any of the CPS schools that were operating at less than 125 percent capacity. This newfound freedom of movement had a strong effect: enrollment at Hyde Park High that fall was lower than expected—so much so that twenty-two teachers were transferred elsewhere in the Chicago Public Schools. The *Herald* reported that the lower enrollment was attributed “to fear of juvenile gangs by parents and students.”¹²⁵ In an editorial that same week, the *Herald* rather ironically proclaimed that in discussions on the public schools, “In the area of safety the tendency is to avoid the subject. Who will we scare if we talk about it? The truth is no one. Much more frightening are the unconfirmed rumors.” The article then went on to bring up and dismiss rumors of violence having

124. “Hyde Park High—Today and Tomorrow’ Topic of Community-Wide Meeting,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 6 January 1965, 1.

125. “Enrollment Down at Hyde Park High; Students, Parents Fear Street Gangs,” *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 21 September 1966, 1.

to do with Kenwood High—never mentioning the very real violence that had developed in Woodlawn and threatened Hyde Park High.¹²⁶ Earlier that year, a freshman at Hyde Park High wrote in a letter to the editor that before her family moved to Hyde Park, her parents had been warned that the school was very dangerous and academically unsound.¹²⁷ Clearly, violence was central in the minds of parents even though it tended only to be spoken of in hushed tones.

The idea that violence was central to Hyde Park High's decline is supported by the experience of other schools undergoing desegregation in the urban North. In 1971 in Pontiac, Michigan, an anti-busing mother protested: "We want to keep our children in our neighborhood where we know they're safe. Suppose I send my daughter to school and she gets thrown through a window and breaks her neck, or she gets molested or stabbed."¹²⁸ A mother from a Detroit suburb similarly complained: "I would never know if my children were safe. We pay high taxes for good schools and now they want to bus my children to an inner city school."¹²⁹ In Boston in 1974, many parents protested the busing plans because they feared sending their children to schools in what were seen as unsafe neighborhoods.¹³⁰ Hyde Park differed from these schools in that its violence was not exacerbated by anger about legally mandated segregation. Yet, more importantly, Hyde Park mirrored these schools because many of its parents feared

126. "Schools Must Be Kept Safe," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 21 September 1966, 4.

127. Debbie Ticktin, "Letter to the Editor," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 23 February 1966, 4.

128. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston*, 133.

129. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston*, 162.

130. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*.

sending their children into a neighborhood that increasingly resembled the specter of the urban ghetto. These fears of violence were strong enough to convince even steadfast supporters of integration to abandon the school.

By 1966, under the combination of the pressures of race, class, violence, and overcrowding, community representatives from Hyde Park and Kenwood convinced the School Board to build a new high school in Hyde Park-Kenwood. The rapidity with which the school was opened after this decision shows that the community was extremely uncomfortable with the current situation at Hyde Park High. The decision to build the new high school was made in February of 1966, though its site and which students it would enroll were not settled for sure until July of 1966.¹³¹ During July and August 1966, a principal was hired, teachers were hired, and an entire curriculum was put together.¹³² Given how committed Hyde Parkers were to high-quality education, this shotgun school opening demonstrated a great amount of fear in the community which had not been evident in the debates about the school; such fear must have come at least in part from the economic decline of Woodlawn and the rise of the Blackstone Rangers and violence.

Kenwood High, once opened, demonstrated that Hyde Parkers were indeed comfortable with integration so long as it meant integration by race but not class. When Kenwood High opened, its student body was only twenty-seven percent white, yet integration lasted at Kenwood

131. "New High School for Hyde Park," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 2 February 1966, 1; "CCC Gives Full Approval to High School Site Requested by Bd of Education," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 6 July 1966, 1.

132. "Mollahan Named to High School Post," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 20 July 1966, 1; "Set Ninth Grade Curriculum for Fall," *Hyde Park Herald* (Chicago), 13 July 1966, 1.

High until the turn of the new century.¹³³ Having removed a large percentage of low-income students from the school by cutting out Woodlawn and removing the worst threats of violence by changing the location, white Hyde Park and Kenwood parents were able to overcome whatever discomforts they had with sending their children to a high school that was majority black.

In avoiding Woodlawn's class difficulties—and the violence that sprang from them—Hyde Park and Kenwood residents were avoiding a situation partly of their own making. For one thing, under the leadership of the University of Chicago they had tried to purify their neighborhoods of poverty through urban renewal programs, thus segregating it in places such as Woodlawn. This segregation of poverty created an intensification of its effects. The community also failed on the whole to rally behind Hyde Park High and give it the kind of support it needed to succeed as it coped with massive, challenging changes. Even more directly, Hyde Park High itself may have contributed to the growth of violence via the Blackstone Rangers by kicking Jeff Fort, the gang's future founder, out of school. Nonetheless, Hyde Park and Kenwood were not responsible for many of the larger causes of the rise of the Rangers and violence, such as the crippling of the industrial economy in the second half of the century, which worsened poverty. Nor were they responsible for the unequal educational backgrounds of low-income students coming from outside of the community, or for the extreme degree of racial segregation that was maintained throughout most of the city.

133. *Racial Ethnic Survey: Students*, (Chicago Board of Education, Chicago, 1968); Elizabeth Duffrin, "Kenwood Academy Limits Outsiders" *Catalyst: Independent coverage of Chicago School Reform*, March 2003, <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/arch/03-03/0303kenwood.htm>.

Thus, in the end, though Hyde Park residents were privileged members of the liberal elite, they were also victims of circumstance: many worked hard to create a racially integrated school, and fewer but still some worked to mend the rifts created by the weaknesses of the educational backgrounds of poor students. These community members failed to maintain Hyde Park High as an integrated school, but not because they were hypocrites: they were under an extreme amount of pressure to fix through individual effort problems which had been forced upon them by society at large. Rather than focusing on eventual failure, then, the story of Hyde Park High ought to be viewed in the light of the temporary success it was able to achieve despite the many challenges it faced. In the pro-integration actions of Hyde Parkers which made the limited success possible, there is visible a dedication to integration much deeper than would be predicted by the critiques of northern liberal elites made by school desegregation historians. Though sometimes erring, and though unable to make the situation permanent, for two decades at Hyde Park High School, this community lived integration. ■

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