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Harvard Students, the Boston Elite, and the New England Preparatory System, 1800-1876

RONALD STORY

THE HARVARD COLLEGE student body, like the university as a whole, changed markedly in the ante-bellum era, but it changed less in size than in composition. (1) Though the number of yearly graduates remained stable at about 60 from 1810 to 1850, the students came increasingly from Boston's "rich and fashionable families." (2) More precisely, they came from the new business and professional families who provided the funds for Harvard's rapid growth and came by degrees to control its governing bodies. The Harvard "experience" became an important part of the process of elite social, economic, and cultural consolidation in these years, and contributed to the cohesiveness, cultivation, and hauteur of the distinctive Brahmin upper class that was to flourish after the Civil War. (3) Analysis of the way in which Harvard came to be monopolized by the Boston elite should throw light not only on the development of the class but also on the evolving educational network which formed a portion of its institutional underpinnings.

There was considerable discussion in the ante-bellum years of Harvard's "aristocratic" exclusiveness, particularly after 1820 when the pattern became both acutely visible and pronounced. (4) University officers explained this new condition by reference to the religious bigotry which made Orthodox Congregationalists keep their sons away from Harvard, then controlled predominantly by Unitarians. They noted, too, the establishment of other colleges in which young men now matriculated. (5) Neither of these explanations, however, satisfied Harvard's critics, who argued that its Unitarian ambience reflected the predominance of the Boston elite at the college. They also maintained that many boys attended other "seminaries" only because they could could not gain admission to Harvard, whose facilities and advantages

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were far superior to those of its competitors, including Yale. The critics, who ranged in label from Orthodox Congregationalists to Jacksonian Democrats to radical Free-Soilers to working-class Know-Nothings, singled out two simpler and more specific factors to explain the change in the college's student body: the rising cost of a Harvard education and the rising educational requirements for admission.

Surviving evidence confirms that costs were moving upward. As early as 1831 critics were complaining that "the expense of an education at Cambridge are greater than are necessary." (6) In 1845 a leading Democrat charged: (7)

> The expenses of tuition have been increased at least 50 per cent beyond what they formerly were; and for some of the classes 33 and a third per cent beyond what they were when I was a student [in 1817]. Yet the College has all the time been growing more opulent. The charge for tuition is greater in Cambridge than at those institutions where there are no endowments.

Tuition proper rose from $20 in 1807 to $75 in 1845 to $104 in 1860. Overall expenses (to which critics generally referred) also increased, although how much is not clear. University officials placed the minimum cost of a year for a Harvard undergraduate at $176 in 1825, $185 in 1835, and $249 in 1860, a rate of increase much faster than the rate of inflation, but still one that was relatively modest. (8)

The actual minimum costs were probably higher. In 1837 a youth wrote to industrialist Amos Lawrence: (9)

> The expense of an education at Cambridge is much greater than is generally supposed; and far exceeds your estimate. Those who are concerned in the government of the University, have ever represented the *necessary* expenses as less than they really are. Mother has made many inquiries of students, and has taken great care to obtain correct information. But few indigent students have gone . . . to Cambridge, most of them being obliged to enter at some college where they can live more cheaply.

In 1854 a student from New York wrote that tuition aside, "travelling expenses, furnishing the room, etc., though all extravagance was avoided, have required more than we anticipated." (10) A knowledgeable English traveller observed in 1861: "The expense of education at Harvard College is not much lower than at our colleges . . . . The actual authorized expenditure in accordance with the rules is only 50 L per annum, i.e. 249 dollars; but this does not, by any means, include everything." (11) The real minimum cost of a Harvard year, though impossible to estimate precisely, probably rose from about $150 in the early 1800s to about $400 by the outbreak of the Civil War.

"The cause of education, of good morals, of sound learning," wrote one of Harvard's critics in 1848, "demands that the expenses of obtaining a thorough education in our Commonwealth should be greatly reduced and brought as

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low as possible;—the highest, as well as those of inferior grade." (12) In practice even the "well-born" sometimes had difficulty entering Harvard, as Theodore Parker pointed out a year later. (13) Poor relations begged funds from their affluent cousins; sons of men in sudden financial straits turned elsewhere or simply did not enter college. In *The Barclays of Boston,* a society novel written by Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis in the mid-1850s, the son of heroine Emma Sanderson was "filled with an ardent desire to go to Cambridge." But the widowed Emma was "unable to meet the expenses attendant on a college life." (14)

Expense was as much a question of living standards as of survival, and the standard of living, of course, had been rising at Harvard since the turn of the century. Presidents John T. Kirkland (1810-1828) and Josiah Quincy (1829-1845) had tacitly, and indeed sometimes openly, encouraged social elegance at the college. A Virginian complained in 1813 "that your Principal and Professors take a pride in the extravagance of the students, and encourage it." (15) Six years later a committee of University Overseers agreed that: (16)

the increase of the *private* expenses of the Students is a subject deserving of the most careful consideration. It is found that there is a perpetual inclination to indulge in expensive pleasures, & in useless & unnecessary extravagance of dress.

But the root of this tendency was less the administration than the students themselves, who brought elite tastes and resources with them: "Father wants cheap living; Son has his way: and has his way, because it is *not fashionable* to live cheap." (17) A more sumptuous scale of living resulted, as noted in this report from the 1850s: (18)

A carpet on a college room . . . was 50 years ago, an unknown luxury; and 25 years ago, the want of one would not have been noticeable. Now all the rooms are carpeted; and a similar change has taken place in furniture, dress, and the supplies of the table.

Average expenses were, in fact, significantly higher than the minimum estimates and rose equally, if not more, rapidly. The following table provides a rough approximation of the increase of average as compared to other costs: (19)

	1810	*1835*	*1860*
tuition	$20	$55	$104
official minimum costs	na	185	249
real minimum costs (est.)	150	300	400
average costs	225	400	700

The average, significantly, did not rise so precipitously because of the inordi-

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nate extravagance of a few students, although expenditure of $2,000 a year were not uncommon by the 1860s. Rather, it rose because a greater proportion of the students—certainly a considerable majority—spent relatively large sums. The average, that is, was more than a mere average: it was also a standard.

By 1840 this fashionable lifestyle was affecting the composition of the student body. As a critic wrote in 1845 with regard to Harvard: (20)

> The habits of economy at a place of education are affected by the character of the collective body of the pupils. As expenses increase, the sons of the less affluent begin to remain away, and the absence of their influence aggravates the tendency to expensive gratifications.

A faculty member noted soon after that "a standard of expense, in regard to dress, pocket-money, furniture, etc., has been established which renders it almost a hopeless matter for a young man of slender means to obtain an education there." (21) For as an Overseer committee observed a few years later: (22)

> Parents will not, as a general thing, expose their sons to the severe test of sending them to a place where they may possibly meet expenses which are absolutely necessary, but where they will be unable to conform to the common mode of living of the community with which they associate. Such a trial is beyond the strength of most young men of the age at which they usually enter college.

Scholarship aid, except of the kind extended by the wealthy to their impecunious kinsmen, was generally unavailable. Only two of thirty-four large-scale private bequests to Harvard from 1800 to 1850 were for undergraduate assistance, and the first of these did not accrue until 1839. Unrestricted funds invariably went for other purposes, as did tuition fees. Some scholarships did exist, including a few surviving fellowships for boys from designated towns and a small grant from the state. But in 1831 only thirty-four Harvard students received aid as opposed, for example, to 144 at Yale. In 1851 President Jared Sparks told an inquirer that a very good student might, at best, receive $50 a year outright and an equal sum on loan. After 1826, moreover, the university reduced the length of its winter vacation, making it more difficult for needy students to earn money teaching school. In the 1850s several scholarship funds were established in response both to extreme political pressure and to faculty complaints about the quality of academic life. By 1860 Harvard was offering 32 scholarships worth from $100 to $300 a year, plus grants and loans of $20 to $80 a year for about fifty students. (23) Perhaps 15 per cent of the students received aid in the 1860s. But the fact remains that a growing proportion of those who attended ante-bellum Harvard paid their own way.

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And the fact that they paid dearly helps explain the increasing monopolization of the college by the Boston elite.

Admissions requirements rose, apparently, even faster than costs. In 1818 President Kirkland wrote that improved schools were producing students better prepared in mathematics and the classics. As of 1826 a boy versed in the fundamentals of English and arithmetic needed perhaps a year's extra labor in the classics in order to pass the still casual admissions examination. In the early 1830s, however, candidates began to fail in significant numbers; many others were accepted "conditionally." By 1840 Harvard's admissions requirements were unquestionably the highest in New England, necessitating from three to four years of preparation. Moreover, the entrance examination continued to increase in difficulty. In 1845 the list of classical readings was much longer than in 1835; by 1855 it contained samplings of geography and history. In 1850 the qualifying examination was eight hours long; by 1865, when the requirements, though still traditional, were also still the stiffest in New England, the examination took three days to administer, and "no one could be certain of getting through." (24)

The stiffening requirements raised the average age of Harvard students from roughly fifteen and a half in 1810 to seventeen and a half in 1850. They also affected the social composition of the student body, causing a Democrat in 1845 to question the notion (25)

that higher qualifications should be the requirement of admission. Such additional requirements could easily be made a part of instruction in the excellent public school in Boston and in some few Academies and private schools. They could not be made general in the preparatory schools of the country; and they would, therefore, shut the doors of Harvard College still more effectually against almost all but the sons of residents in Boston and a few favored places.

An undergraduate of the mid-1830s observed that the stricter requirements favored boys from "the Public Latin Schools of Boston and Salem, the academies of Exeter and Andover, and the famous Round-Hill School at Northampton." (26) A rural student of the late 1840s recalled: (27)

A lad thus partially trained must enter college badly handicapped in a company of classmates thoroughly drilled in such schools as the Boston Latin, Andover, Exeter and the large private fitting schools of cities.

It is difficult to discover precisely which schools prepared Harvard students because the data is extremely fragmentary for the entire ante-bellum period, especially for the years before 1830. In general, however, the pattern that emerges from presidential reports, class books, school histories, contemporary descriptions, and latter-day biographies is roughly as shown in the follow-

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ing table on the percentage of students entering Harvard from certain schools and types of schools in three successive periods: (28)

	1801-20	*1821-45*	*1846-70*
Boston Latin School	15%	12%	14%
Phillips Academies	15	14	20
Boston private day schools	10	15	21
other academies	20	21	10
private boarding schools	20	18	2
private tutors	20	18	17
other public schools	0	2	17

Even at first glance the figures tend to support the main allegations of contemporary observers. Early in the era the Boston Latin, Phillips Exeter, and Phillips Andover supplied between a quarter and a third of Harvard students; by midcentury they supplied slightly more than a third. The Boston day schools raised their total from approximately a tenth to approximately a fifth over the same period. These three sources provided approximately two-fifths of the students in the early years; they provided well over half later on. Meanwhile, the number of students from rural academies other than Andover and Exeter fell by half; the private (or proprietary) boarding schools declined even more. Public high schools outside Boston, on the other hand, came from nowhere to occupy a supply role comparable to the Boston Latin itself.

The gross categories obscure some aspects of the overall trend. For instance, the proportion of Harvardians from private boarding schools—institutions providing preparatory instruction to boarders for profit—was about the same in the twenty years after 1820 as in the twenty years before. In the earlier decades, however, these schools, often in western Massachusetts, were mainly conducted by ministers who boarded a few boys in order to supplement their ministerial and farming income. The school of the Reverend Samuel Ripley and his wife in Waltham and Concord was a singularly successful, long-lived version of this type of ministerial schooling. Pedagogically gifted, the Ripleys attracted enough patronage from prominent families to become one of the four main private boarding schools preparing students for Harvard in the second quarter of the century. Of the other three, the one conducted by Stephen Minot Weld in Jamaica Plain from the 1820s till about 1850 was perhaps closest in spirit and form to the older type, charing fees to a comparatively small number of boys in return for unadorned classical training. But Weld, who had graduated from Harvard in 1826, was an educator rather than a minister, and he staffed his school with well-paid aspiring teachers from the new Harvard. Weld himself was also from a prominent family and drew from a broader, more prominent clientele than his predecessors.

More important yet were the Round Hill School in Northampton and

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the Wells School in Cambridge, each of which sent almost 50 boys to Harvard between the mid-1820s and the mid-1830s. Round Hill, the most famous American school of its time, was conducted by a group of men who had attended Exeter and Harvard, traveled in Europe, and obtained a loan from no less than Harvard itself to establish an institution for the sons of "the best families" of Boston, New York, and the South. Modeled in part after the German gymnasium, Round Hill offered an excellent but very expensive education and at the same time provided an elegant lifestyle with servants, stables, and tours of the estates of prominent Bostonians. Its rolls bore the names of dozens of Boston's elite families. (30) The school of Williams Wells, a former Boston publisher and bookseller, operated according to the traditional English rules of strict discipline and plain living. But Wells too offered sound training, utilizing Harvard graduates as instructors. His school "had a wide-spread influence and reputation." (31) By 1830 it was "regarded as being—with the possible exception of the Boston Latin School—the best place in which to fit for Harvard College, and was therefore much sought by the best Boston families." (32) Wells likewise attracted the sons of Harvard faculty members and other Cambridge literati, some of whom were day students. The Wells and Round Hill Schools both disbanded in the 1830s, but while they lasted they were the most exclusive preparatory establishments in the country, prefiguring by a quarter of a century the Episcopalian boarding schools of St. Paul's and St. Mark's which eventually succeeded them—a far cry from the parlor of the rural minister.

The private day schools of Boston took up a part of the slack caused by the eclipse of the private boarding school. Again the broad category obscures important developments. In the early years of the century a third of Boston's 1,500 school children attended private schools, several of which provided classical education on a comparatively exclusive basis. The following regulation was typical: (33)

> In order that the School may always be a select one, it is distinctly understood, that the consent of at least two-thirds of the original parties to this instrument must be obtained before any other persons are admitted.

Sometimes the preceptors were socially prominent and operated according to British patterns. The three leading schools—those of William Jenks, J. S. J. Gardiner, and Elisha Clap—were all conducted by ministers. Even the best of these schools, however, seldom lasted a decade.

Over the next thirty years six important private day schools operated in the Boston area. Five were run along conventional lines by professional educators with Harvard degrees. The schools of Daniel G. Ingraham, Thomas G. Bradford, and William H. Brooks sent boys to Harvard on a sporadic basis

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from 1820 till the 1850s. That of Frederic Leverett, who served briefly as headmaster of the Boston Latin, lasted from 1822 to 1835, when it was replaced, in a sense, by the school of Samuel Eliot, who taught from 1840 to 1855 before leaving for Trinity College. The sixth school was the Chauncy Hall School founded in 1828 by Gideon Thayer, who previously had run a smaller Boston school. Chauncy Hall mainly provided "English" (or non-classical) education to boys not bound for college; it therefore resembled both the public Boston English High School which had opened in 1821 and the many rural academies with their "practical" curricula. Thayer's facilities were supposedly "unsurpassed" as of 1830, and his "classical department" supplied modest numbers of Harvard students far beyond 1855, when Thayer himself retired to head an insurance company owned by Chauncy Hall graduates. (34)

Phase three of the Boston private day school system began in 1851 when Epes Sargent Dixwell, an 1827 Harvard graduate who still lived in Cambridge, resigned the headmastership of Boston Latin to open his own school. A wealthy man with legal training, Dixwell was the brother of a prominent banker and the husband of a Bowditch. He was also "a most accomplished man, an elegant scholar, a gentleman of the world." Not surprisingly, his school quickly became "the best fitting-school for Harvard," the resort of boys from Brookline and other suburbs as well as Beacon Hill. (35) Most of the growing share of Harvard students from Boston private day schools in the middle years of the century may be accounted for by the opening of Dixwell's, whose clientele was no less well-educated, prominent and exclusive than that of Round Hill. Dixwell's school explains, at least in part, the following figures on Boston private education: (36)

	1849-50	*1859-60*	*% change*
number of schools	61	58	-5
number of pupils	1,800	2,100	17
annual budget	$133,000	$185,000	39
budget per school	$2,100	$3,190	46

While the number of schools (primary as well as advanced) declined, the number of pupils rose, as did annual expenditures. The budget per school increased most of all, with each school becoming (like Dixwell's) more affluent. By the early 1860s the Hopkinson and Noble schools, modeled after Dixwell's, were in operation. The three institutions together virtually inaugurated the high-quality upper-class day school system of the late nineteenth century.

The New England academies were quasi-public post-common school institutions that sprang up mostly in the period immediately following the Revo-

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lution. Of the 400 or so in existence in Massachusetts as of 1860, perhaps a third had state charters and possibly a tenth had public or private endowments. All but one or two charged tuition, and all without exception had self-perpetuating private boards of trustees. Located mostly in rural areas, they usually offered an "English" curriculum and catered principally to local residents, some of whom boarded. Many also offered a classical program for future collegians, but comparatively few offered mainly or exclusively college preparatory work or catered to a clientele outside the immediate vicinity. (37) The academies fed a steady stream of boys to Harvard (and other colleges) in the ante-bellum era, supplying slightly more than a third of the incoming students at Cambridge before 1820 and slightly less than a third after 1845.

Here, too, additional analysis is in order. Harvard-oriented academies always were incorporated, for example, and always taught the classics. Usually old, well-endowed, and better known and equipped than their imitators, they were the best of the lot. Only about twenty of these New England academies sent boys to Harvard even in the first third of the century, and only a dozen or so after about 1840. Among these were the Roxbury Latin School and the Milton Academy near Boston and the Dummer, Lawrence, and Leicester Academies of Byfield, Groton, and Worcester, respectively. Before 1840 the Beverly, Westford, and Lancaster Academies, the Derby Academy of Hingham, and the Bristol Academy of Taunton sent a sprinkling of boys to Cambridge; after 1841, the Hopkins School of Cambridge and the Williston Seminary of Easthampton sent a few. (38)

Most important were the Phillips Academies of Andover, Massachusetts, and Exeter, New Hampshire, which were old and well-endowed, concentrated mainly on mathematics and the classics, and attracted widespread elite patronage virtually from their founding about 1780. Together they accounted for some two-fifths of the academy-prepared Harvardians before 1820, slightly fewer until about 1845, and then two-thirds thereafter, when they increased their flow as other academies faded. But even this figure is misleading, for Andover's contribution had declined for religious and other reasons. While an occasional Andoverite still appeared at Cambridge, by 1855 the academy was offering only half the Greek and Latin required by Harvard; her graduates went mostly to Yale. Phillips Exeter, by contrast, matched its curriculum closely to Harvard's requirements; by 1845 fitting for "college" at Exeter "of course meant Harvard." (39) After 1850, in fact, Exeter supplied over one-half the academy boys at Harvard, an average of perhaps fifteen a year, or almost a fifth of all entering New Englanders. In the late 1860s the Exeter total was 23 a year, highest by far for any single school. (40)

Private tutors, the next to last majority category, sent boys to Harvard throughout the period, their number declining proportionately only slightly if

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at all. Yet even here there was a change. Before 1820 the tutor was often a local minister who instructed a boy as a favor to a rural family or kinsman; in many cases the tutee was the minister's son. Thereafter, however, tutors were more commonly young Harvard graduates who lived in the household of wealthy Boston-area families, especially during the summer season in Brookline, Nahant, or some other elite suburb. (41) Occasionally the tutor also served as European travelling companion, chaperoning as well as teaching. More and more, in fact, private tutelage occurred in Europe under Europeans, sometimes in connection with a school in England, France, Germany, or Switzerland. By mid-century private tutees as a whole were a slightly less important component of incoming Harvard classes. Those who did arrive came less often from the rural minister's study and more frequently from the family townhouse or suburban estate; a significant number—among them three Coolidges, two Lowells, and an Appleton—came freshly prepared from Europe.

Finally, there were the public schools: tax-supported, tuition-free, controlled by elected officials. Of these the most important by far was the ancient Boston Latin School. Even in the early nineteenth century, when the Boston Latin was in comparatively shabby and disreputable state, it managed to supply a tenth of all Harvard students and was in fact the only public school to supply any at all. After 1815 headmaster Benjamin Apthorp Gould, a wealthy and well-connected protege of President Kirkland of Harvard, introduced several innovations—the misdemeanor mark, the weekly declamation, the school library, regular report cards—which attracted students (or parents) and enabled the school to keep pace with Harvard requirements. During the headmastership of Epes Dixwell from 1836 to 1851, the school moved to new quarters and a private Boston Latin School Association emerged to provide political support and financial aid. Despite stiff competition, the Boston Latin was supplying by mid-century about as large a share of incoming Harvard classes as it had 50 years before. A Boston Latin graduate of the 1850s recalled the "sprinkling" of Beacon Hill boys as "small." Nonetheless, it was still "a select school, principally . . . for the rich and exclusive." (42) Boys from the Boston Latin, like those from Exeter and Dixwell's, "seemed to touch the appreciation of the Harvard examining board a little more deftly than an applicant from any other place." (43)

Until the 1820s Boston Latin was the only public school contributing to Harvard. By 1830 the Salem and Cambridge Latin Schools had revived from their eighteenth-century doldrums and were fitting a few boys. Twenty years later the modern high school movement was well underway. In Salem and Cambridge new high schools absorbed the older Latin schools, which became classical departments. Elsewhere classical departments developed with the

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school. Every sizeable Massachusetts town had a high school—over a hundred as of the Civil War—offering a basic English curriculum. (44) But not every public high school could boast a college preparatory program, and those that did often had curricula that were inadequate for Harvard. Outside Boston, only Salem and Cambridge sent many boys to Cambridge; next came Brookline, Dorchester, and Charlestown in roughly that order. Only about fifteen of the Massachusetts public schools sent boys to Harvard even after 1850, and a mere half-dozen—all in the Boston vicinity—provided 80 percent of these. The residue came from Lowell, Lynn, Worcester, and other industrial towns, whose new high schools helped further to eliminate the rural academy as a significant component in the preparatory network.

Refined by analysis, the table of Harvard preparatory education appears as follows:

	1801-20	*1821-45*	*1846-70*
public schools:			
Boston Latin School	15%	12%	14%
North Shore/suburban	0	2	12
other	0	0	12
academies:			
Exeter	8	9	16
Andover	7	5	4
other	20	21	10
private boarding schools:			
ministerial	15	5	1
other	5	13	1
private tutors:			
ministerial	10	8	5
other	10	10	12
Boston private day schools:			
Dixwell/Noble	0	0	12
other	10	15	9

The dozen most important schools for Harvard between 1800 and 1870 were approximately as follows:

	active years	*number of students sent to Harvard (approx.)*
Boston Latin School	1801-70	750
Phillips Exeter Academy	1801-70	550
Phillips Andover Academy	1801-70	250
Cambridge High School	1820-70	100
Salem High School	1820-70	75
Dixwell School	1851-70	75

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Round Hill School	1823-34	50
Wells School	1824-35	50
Milton Academy	1807-60	50
Lawrence Academy	1801-70	50
Ingraham School	1820-50	50
Noble School	1860-70	50

As of mid-century three schools—Exeter, the Boston Latin, and Dixwell's in that order—supplied almost 40 percent of incoming Harvard classes. Andover, Chauncy Hall, and the Cambridge and Salem High Schools (plus Roxbury Latin, Charlestown High, and Noble's after 1860) supplied another quarter or more. Students from the other rural academies and private boarding schools were largely gone from the Harvard scene; those from the new public high schools and Episcopal boarding schools for the most part had yet to arrive.

The cost of preparatory education varied enormously from one decade or type of school to the next. Public schools were tuition-free, of course, as was the private Roxbury Latin School. Among the private boarding schools tuition at Round Hill came to $300 a year; Wells, Weld, and Ripley's charged from one-third to one-half of that amount, and the ministerial schools probably $50 a year or less. As of 1865 St. Paul's and St. Marks's charged $500. A ministerial tutor in 1810 might charge little or nothing, whereas a Boston tutor by 1850 sometimes asked as much as $500. The cheapest of the private Boston day schools, Chauncy Hall, cost $80 for the classical track in 1835, $100 in 1855, and $155 in 1865; other day schools ranged from about a hundred dollars in 1815 to about $250 in 1855. Among the academies the Phillips schools, which assessed a boarder about $60 as of 1820, were often cheaper in the early years than other academies, which generally required a boarder to pay from $80 to $100; at these rates many boys from poor families could and did attend. But by the 1850s the Phillips schools cost a minimum of about $150, while the other academies were charging in the vicinity of $125. (45)

As schools evolved from the transient, the amateur, and the modest to the more permanent, professional, and luxurious, they also moved from the relatively cheap to the relatively dear. The literature of the period is full of examples of boys unable to pay for preparatory education or able to obtain it only with great sacrifice. The public high schools constituted a countervailing current to this trend. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, these schools, although free, were mainly for the progeny of the community elites. This was especially true in the Boston area, from which most high-school-fitted boys came. (46) The best high schools were in fact mostly in the eastern part of the state. The following table suggests the general pattern:

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% *Harvard students from:*	*1801-15*	*1820-45*	*1850-65*
Boston area schools	40%	55%	65%
schools charging $150 per year or more	0	10	45
schools from Boston area or charging $150 per year or both	40	60	75

The figures corroborate the judgments of observers that the stiffer Harvard admissions requirements favored Boston-area students. But by the 1820s cost, too, was a factor: as the years needed to pass the entrance exam increased, so did the cost per year.

In 1846 Theodore Parker wrote: (47)

> The poor man's son, however well-born, struggling for a superior education, obtains his culture at a monstrous cost; with the sacrifice of pleasure, comfort, the joys of youth, often of eyesight and health.... The rich man's son needs not that terrible trial. He learns from his circumstances, not his soul. The air about him contains a diffused element of thought. He learns without knowing it.... All the outward means of educating, refining, elevating a child, are to be had for money, and money alone.

Parker was overstating his case a bit. The high schools and remaining academies as well as the ministerial tutors produced a small stream of impecunious but deserving boys, who subsequently benefitted from scholarship assistance at Cambridge. For the 70 percent who were neither public school graduates nor charity students, the cost of a Harvard degree—three years of preparation and four of residence—was about $2,000, a figure near the top of the middle-class income range, equivalent in 1970 terms to about $30,000. "To be the son of rich parents," said Brahmin James Cabot in 1867, "considerably increases the chances of being sent to college." (48)

Did Harvard deliberately adopt policies, as critics sometimes insinuated, which excluded the provincial and the poor? Over the years the administration spent tuition and endowment funds to beautify Harvard Yard, expand and modernize its plant, and pay better salaries to more instructors. It also raised entrance requirements to improve the quality of incoming students. High tuition and high requirements both had the unexceptionable aim of enhancing the quality of student life and instruction. In practice, it improved the situation of a small number of students who came, as critics and defenders alike acknowledged, increasingly from the Boston elite. The fact that costs and requirements began to rise just as Boston lawyers and businessmen gained administrative power at Harvard doubtless made matters seem vaguely collusive. University patrons and officials, for example, endowed or super-

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vised many parts of the preparatory network—the Boston Latin, Cambridge High, Exeter, Dixwell's, Roxbury Latin, Milton, Lawrence, Dummer, Round Hill, and Wells, among others. Having made arrangements for their own sons and those of other members of the elite, they could raise requirements with relative personal impunity. They could then shape school offerings to match new university requirements, which they also determined.

The consequences of these developments were in any case profound. The hero of *Fair Harvard,* an anonymous novel of the 1860s, said to the father of a prospective Harvard student: (49)

One cannot over-estimate the advantage to your son of becoming a member of Harvard College. Not only will he thereby become master of all ancient and modern languages, sciences, and arts; not only will society of the highest fashion and fortune open their doors to welcome him: but he will secure for himself the sure means of future preferment and honor, in any profession he may choose to follow.

Though comically exaggerated, the passage was close to the truth, as a few figures suggest. By the 1870s, Harvard graduates comprised two-fifths of the chief officers of the large New England textile firms and half the directors of the leading Boston banks and insurance companies. Prominence in law, medicine, politics, and scholarship was at least equally great. And as of 1892 approximately 34 percent of the millionaires of Boston had Harvard degrees. (50) By the 1870s Harvard was essentially what Santayana said it was, "the seminary and academy for the inner circle of Bostonians." (51)

Also important was the two-fold way in which this trend influenced New England educational developments. In Massachusetts, a cluster of liberal arts colleges was founded by two groups which Harvard largely ignored: the older provincial elite (Williams, Amherst) and the newer metropolitan middle class (Tufts, Boston University, Boston College). By 1870 these colleges were joined by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Agricultural College, also catering mainly to the middle class. A system of educational "tracking" consequently emerged in the state to parallel the new class structure.

But the influence of the new Harvard also extended to secondary education, for the rising admissions requirements helped produce a system of elite private schooling in which each pupil enjoyed not only comparatively outstanding facilities but a rate of annual expenditure many times that provided to a public school pupil. The preparatory schol system was more casual and open than it would later become, but it was there, nonetheless. Recent scholars have worked fruitfully in ante-bellum public education without, perhaps, recognizing the degree to which secondary education was being permanently tracked along upper and middle (and lower) class lines even in the age of

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reform. It would appear, further, that tracking at both secondary and higher levels relates more or less directly to, among other things, the emergence of the Boston upper class.

Notes

1. For changes at ante-bellum Harvard, see e.g. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 195-301; David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 85-128.
2. Andrew P. Peabody, "The Condition and Wants of Harvard College," *North American Review* 60 (January 1845): 39. For the list of Harvard graduates by years, see *Harvard University Quinquennial Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates, 1636-1930* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), pp. 208-281.
3. For the emergence of elite funding, control and monopolization, see Ronald Story, "Harvard and the Boston Brahmins," *Journal of Social History* 8 (March 1975). For the Boston upper class in general, see e.g. Robert K. Lamb, "The Entrepreneur and the Community," in William Miller, ed., *Men in Business* (New York and Evanston, 1962): 94-119, 350; Frederick Cople Jaher, "The Boston Brahmins in the Age of Industrial Capitalism," in F. C. Jaher, ed., *The Age of Industrialism in America* (New York and London, 1968), pp. 190-193; Richard Eddy Sykes, "Massachusetts Unitarianism and Social Change, 1780-1870," (unpub. diss., University of Minnesota, 1967); Ronald Story, "Class and Culture in Boston," *American Quarterly* 27 (1975).
4. Morison, *Three Centuries,* 216-218; Frederick Robinson, "A Letter to the Hon. Rufus Choate," in Charles Haar, ed., *The Golden Age of American Law* (New York, 1965), p. 91.
5. Josiah Quincy, *Speech of February 25, 1845, on the Minority Report of Mr. Bancroft* (Boston, 1845); Jared Sparks et al, *Memorial on Harvard College* (Boston, 1850).
6. George T. Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis* (Boston, 1879), p. 49.
7. George Bancroft-Board of Overseers, January 1845, Harvard Overseer Reports, v. 7, Harvard University Archives (HUA).
8. See the *Harvard University Catalogue* for 1825, 1835, 1845, and 1860; and William R. Thayer, "The Tuition Fee," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 23 (December 1914): 228.
9. ?-Amos Lawrence, December 22, 1837, Amos Lawrence Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS).
10. Sarah H. Emerson, *Life of Abby Hopper Gibbons* (New York and London, 1897) I: 177.
11. Anthony Trollope, *North America* (Baltimore, 1968), p. 143.
12. Samuel H. Walley, Jr., January 20, 1848, Harvard Overseer Reports, v. 8, HUA.
13. Theodore Parker, "A Sermon of Merchants," November 22, 1846, in *The Works of Theodore Parker,* ed. Frances Cobbe (London, 1876) VII: 9.
14. Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, *The Barclays of Boston* (Boston, 1854), p. 46.
15. Edmund Quincy, *Life of Josiah Quincy* (Boston, 1868), p. 341.
16. April 27, 1819, Harvard Overseer Reports, v. 1, HUA.
17. William G. Stearns-Amos A. Lawrence, July 4, 1860, Amos A. Lawrence Papers, MHS.

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18. E. R. Hoar, J. W. Churchill, L. N. Thayer, January 28, 1858, Harvard Overseers Miscellaneous Reports, v. 1, HUA.
19. See e.g. Ruth H. Sessions, "A Harvard Man's Budget in 1790," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 42 (December 1933): 141; Andrew P. Peabody, *Harvard Graduates Whom I Have Known* (Boston and New York, 1890), p. 82; Isabel Anderson, ed., *The Letters and Journals of General Nicholas Longworth Anderson* (New York, London, Edinburgh, 1942), pp. 129-131; William Everett, "Harvard in 1855." *The Harvard Monthly* 3 (November 1886): 46; George L. Locke-Amos A. Lawrence, July 14, 1858, Amos A. Lawrence Papers; George Torrey, *A Lawyer's Recollections* (Boston, 1910); Robert Grant, *Fourscore* (Boston and New York, 1934), p. 90.
20. George Bancroft-Board of Overseers, January 1845, Harvard Overseer Reports, v. 7, HUA.
21. Francis Bowen, "Eliot's Sketch of Harvard College," *North American Review* 68 (January 1849): 118.
22. E. R. Hoar, J. W. Churchill, L. N. Thayer, January 28, 1858, Harvard Overseer Miscellaneous Reports, v. 1, HUA.
23. *Harvard University Catalogue for 1860-61.*
24. John A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge* (New York, 1953), p. 21. For admissions requirements and examinations, see the catalogues for 1825, 1835, 1845, 1855, and 1865; the annals of the Harvard classes of 1835 and 1852; "Harvard University," *Monthly Chronicle* 2 (February 1841): 64; John T. Kirkland, "Literary Institutions," *North American Review* 7 (July 1818): 270-271; Francis Bowen, "Classical Studies at Cambridge," ibid. 54 (January 1842): 48; Horatio J. Perry, "Harvard and Vacation Fifty Years Ago," *New England Magazine* 9 (October 1893): 208; Samuel G. Ward-Thomas W. Ward, September 9, 1839, Thomas W. Ward Papers, MHS; Ethel Fisk, ed., *The Letters of John Fiske* (New York, 1940), p. 27.
25. George Bancroft-Board of Overseers, January 1845, Harvard Overseer Reports, v. 7, HUA.
26. Thomas Cushing, "Undergraduate Life Sixty Years Ago," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 1 (July 1893): 553.
27. James C. White, "An Undergraduate's Diary, I," *Harvard Graduates Magazine* 21 (March 1913): 423.
28. In arriving at these proportions I have relied most heavily on the classbooks and annals of the Harvard classes of 1811, 1814, 1817, 1822, 1828, 1830, 1835, 1841, 1844, 1852, 1856, 1857, and 1860. None provides complete information for all members of the class, especially before 1830. Two useful supplementary sources are Samuel A. Eliot, ed., *Heralds of a Liberal Faith* (4 vols., Boston, 1910), a biographical compilation covering dozens of early Unitarian ministers, most of whom attended Harvard; and *Harvard Memorial Biographies* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1866), which sketches members of Harvard classes from 1828 to 1865 who died in the Civil War. Charles W. Eliot's *Forty-Ninth Report of the President of Harvard, 1873-1874* (Cambridge, 1875), 82-84, produces an invaluable table on which schools prepared how many entering students from 1867 through 1874. Useful school histories are cited below, as are some of the hundreds of relevant articles and biographical studies of the period. The percentages, needless to say,

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are estimates only. In deriving them I have generally excluded the southern students, who bulked fairly large in several ante-bellum years.

29. See e.g. George F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years* (New York, 1903) I: 86.
30. John S. Bassett, "The Round Hill School," *American Antiquarian Society of Proceedings* n.s. 27 (April 1917): 18-35; J. G. Cogswell, *Outline of the Round Hill School* (Boston 1831); George Bancroft-Ebenezer Francis, March 19, 1827, College Papers, ser. 2, v. 1, HUA.
31. Samuel A. Atkins, *A History of Cambridge, Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1913), p. 103; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Class Lives of Samuel Eliot and Nathaniel Holmes Morison* (Boston, 1926), p. 3.
32. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Old Cambridge* (New York and London, 1900), p. 154. Other important private boarding schools between 1830 and 1850 were those of J. A. Weiss in Roxbury and W. P. Greene in Jamaica Plain.
33. William Jenks, "Plan of a School," c. 1815, ms., Boston Public Library (BPL).
34. *Annual Catalogue of the Teachers and Pupils of Chauncy-Hall School* (Boston, 1835); Thomas Cushing, *Memoir of Gideon Thayer* (n.p., 1865).
35. William Lawrence, *Memories of a Happy Life* (Boston and New York, 1926), p. 12; Octavius B. Frothingham, *Recollections and Impressions, 1822-1890* (New York, 1891), p. 20. See also Charles W. Eliot, *A Late Harvest* (Boston, 1924), pp. 19-20.
36. Computed from the reports of the secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education for 1849-50 and 1859-60.
37. Theodore Sizer, "The Academies: An Interpretation," in Theodore Sizer, ed., *The Age of the Academies* (New York, 1964): 1-48.
38. *Report of the Roxbury School Committee, 1840*; *Report of the Roxbury Perambulating Committee, 1866*; A. K. Teele, *History of Milton Academy, Mass., 1798-1879* (Boston, 1879); John Ragle, *Governor Dummer Academy History, 1763-1963* (S. Byfield, Mass., 1963); *A History of the Dummer Academy* (Newburyport, 1914); *A General Catalogue of the Trustees, Teachers, and Students of Lawrence Academy, Groton, Massachusetts, 1793-1893* (Groton, 1893); *The Jubilee of the Lawrence Academy* (New York, 1855); *The Centenary of Leicester Academy* (Worcester, 1884); Joseph Sawyer, *A History of Williston Seminary* (Norwood, Mass., 1917); "Hopkins Classical School," flyer, Cambridge, October, 1840; "Hopkins Fund Records, 1726-1854," typescript, HUA; G. B. Emerson, *Reminiscences of an Old Teacher* (Boston, 1878): 24-64. Other relevant academies in the early years were the Atkinson Academy, N. H., and the Framingham Academy, Mass.
39. Samuel F. Batchelder, *Bits of Harvard History* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 308.
40. *Biographical Catalogue of the Trustees, Teachers and Students of Phillips Academy, Andover, 1798-1830* (Andover, 1903); Claude M. Fuess, *An Old New England School: A History of Phillips Academy, Andover* (Boston and New York, 1917); *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Phillips Exeter Academy, 1783-1883* (Boston, 1883); Edward Echols, *The Phillips Exeter Academy* (Exeter, 1970); L. M. Crosbie, *The Phillips Exeter Academy* (Exeter, 1923).
41. See e.g. Thomas Mumford, *Memoir of Samuel Joseph May* (Boston, 1873), pp. 25-26, 59.

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42. Grant, *Fourscore,* p. 31; Henry Jenks, *Catalogue of the Boston Public Latin School, with an Historical Sketch* (Boston, 1886), p. 71. See also Joseph Powers and Lee Dunn, "Brief History of the Boston Latin School," typescript, Boston Latin Papers, BPL; "Records of Subscribers to Association Funds," Boston Latin School Ms. #186, BPL.
32. Mark D. Howe, *Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Shaping Years, 1841-1870* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 6-7; Amos French, ed., *Exeter and Harvard Eighty Years Ago: Journals and Letters of F. O. French, '57* (Chester, N.H., 1932), p. 68.
44. Alexander Inglis, *The Rise of the High School in Massachusetts* (New York, 1911); George Wright, "The Schools of Cambridge, 1800-1870," *Cambridge Historical Society Publication* 13 (June 1918): 89-112.
45. On the early day schools, see e.g. Henry B. Fearon, *Sketches of America.* (2nd ed., London, 1818), pp. 112-113; on the academies, Rufus Ellis, "The Academies and Public High Schools of Massachusetts," *Christian Examiner* 50 (January 1851): 27.
46. Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Boston, 1970), pp. 19-112.
47. "A Sermon of Merchants," November 22, 1846, in *Works of Theodore Parker* VII: 9.
48. James E. Cabot, "Bigelow's Classical and Utilitarian Studies," *North American Review* 104 (April 1867): 616.
49. *Fair Harvard* (New York and London, 1869), p. 99.
50. Percentage of Harvard millionaires computed by comparing the composite graduates list in *Harvard University Quinquennial Catalogue,* 1213-1461, with the list of Boston names in Sidney Ratner, ed., *New Light on the History of Great American Fortunes* (New York, 1953), pp. 9-22. The financial institutions analyzed include the Massachusetts, State, and Suffolk Banks, the Bank of Commerce, the Provident Institution for Savings, the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the Boston Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company. For textile firms, see Frances Gregory and Irene Neu, "The American Industrial Elite in the 1870's," in Miller, *Men in Business,* p. 203.
51. George Santayana, *Character and Opinion in the United States* (New York, 1920), p. 40.

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