

# Key Dilemmas (Gateway focus)

- Place and society: The power and limits of physical design
- Unleashing vs. taming the market
- Planning from “above” vs. “below”
- Planning knowledge: Trained professional vs. “indigenous” experts
- Comprehensiveness vs. incrementalism
- The role of identity

# Power and limits of physical design

- Physical design as a tool for enhancing well-being
- Can it also enhance *equity*, i.e. address inequities?
- What “social needs” are uniquely addressed by design interventions?
- How to address a diversity of users/publics?
- Culture and values: What’s culturally determined? How are meanings attached to space? What does design assume about “community”?

# Trained vs. indigenous experts

- What forms of knowledge are *valid*? Who sets the rules?
- What does public participation add to what technical experts provide?
- How can distinct types of expertise be *blended* to create better, not just more popular, solutions?
- Technocratic modernism vs. “deliberative democracy”

# Planning traditions

KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION	Conservative	Radical
In SOCIETAL GUIDANCE	<i>Policy analysis</i>	<i>Social reform</i>
In SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION	<i>Social learning</i>	<i>Social mobilization</i>

# Boston: Developing and Redeveloping Public Housing

- Focus is mostly on 2 of the “6 Key Dilemmas”:
  1. Trained vs. Indigenous Expertise
  2. Power and Limits of Physical Design

# Overview of Presentation

- 1. Public Housing Pre-history and History-- the cultural challenges of planning action on low-income housing in the United States.
- 2. The Evolution of the Boston Housing Authority as an institution.
- 3. A City of Three Tales--a comparison of public housing redevelopment in 3 Boston neighborhoods.

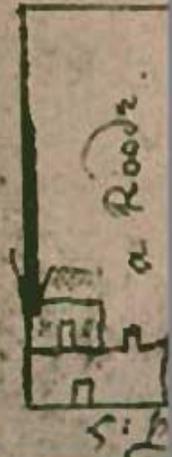
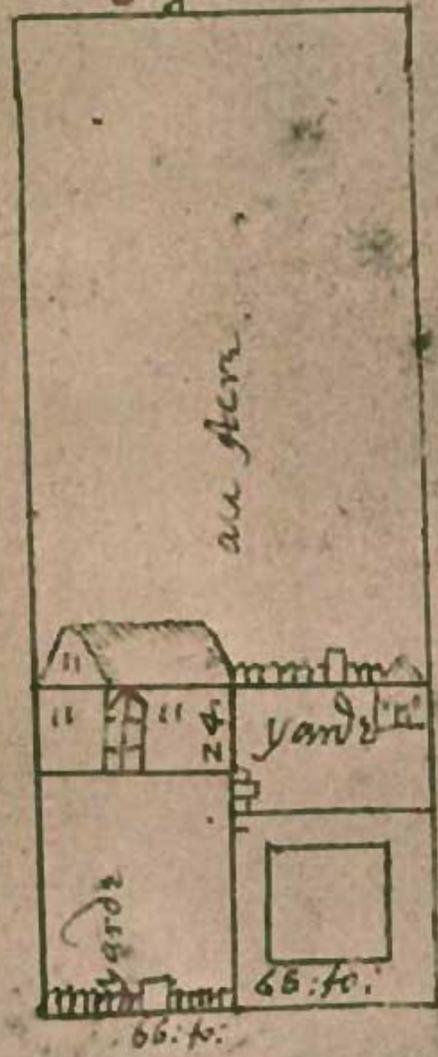
# For Further Information, Reference:

- Vale, Lawrence J. *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. ISBN: 0674002865.
- Vale, Lawrence J. *Reclaiming Public Housing: A Half Century of Struggle in Three Public Neighborhoods*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0674008987.

# The Struggle to Build Public Housing (a pre-history)

Government housing assistance:  
Reward? or Coping Mechanism?

8: p<sup>ts</sup>.



is a  
moral  
er of



*"His Castle"*  
**Home Owning Breeds Real Men**

It is what puts the MAN back in MANHOOD



*"Does Brown own his home?  
No, he rents. Haven't you  
seen him scratch matches on  
the wall paper?"*

# Images of Homeownership, 1922



*It makes childhood happier.*

and ideals of life and creates a powerful influence for success throughout their lives.

The child's danger from sickness is far less in the owned home than in the rented house in which many families of unknown habits have lived.

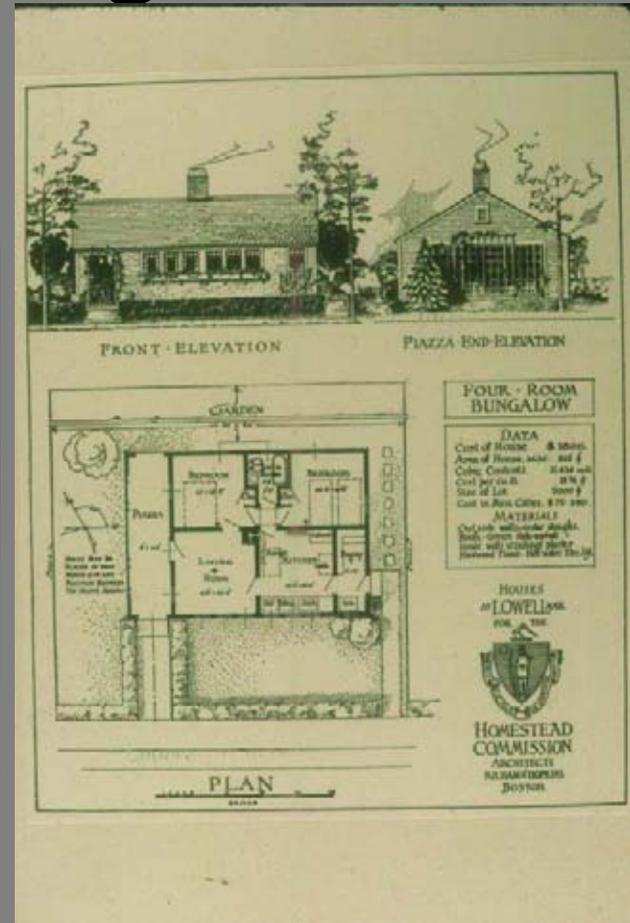
*Every child has the RIGHT to a home of its own.  
The child raised in a rented house or apartment  
is CHEATED.*

tracts. Infant mortality

In the more central local  
the chief rental areas, the  
all against the safety of  
The traffic dangers from  
streets, and in going to ar  
are constant. Each day



# Small Homesteads for the Worthy Working Poor



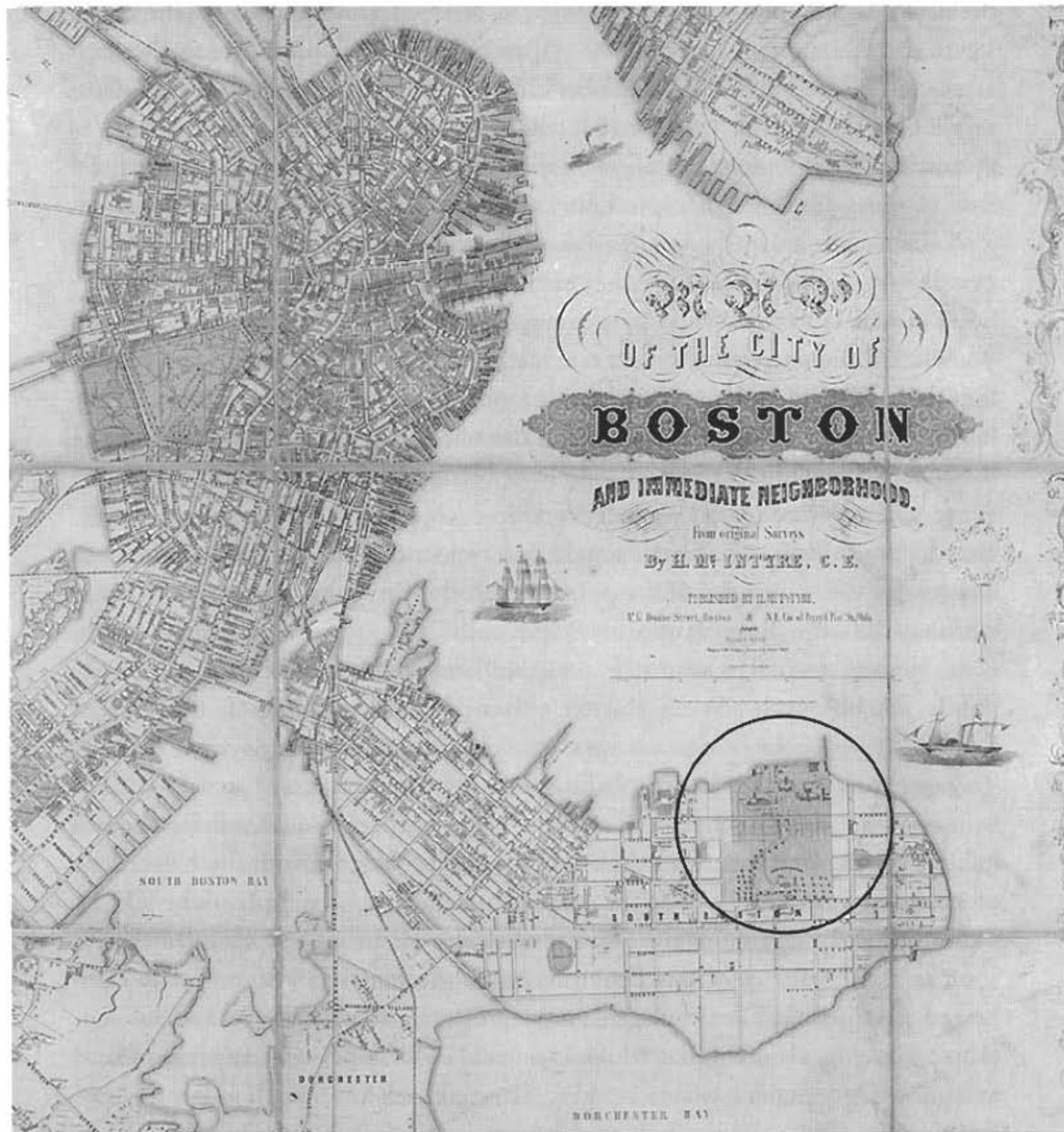
# Large Institutions for Housing the Non-Worthy Poor



*Engraved according to Act of Congress by A. Brown*

*A. Brown del. et sc.*

ALMS-HOUSE, LEVERET STREET.



OF THE CITY OF

**BOSTON**

AND IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD.

From original Surveys  
By H. M. INTRE, C. E.

PUBLISHED BY H. INTRE,  
No. 10 State Street, Boston & No. 11, Central Street, New York.

1854

SOUTH BOSTON BAY

SOUTH COVE

DORCHESTER

DORCHESTER BAY



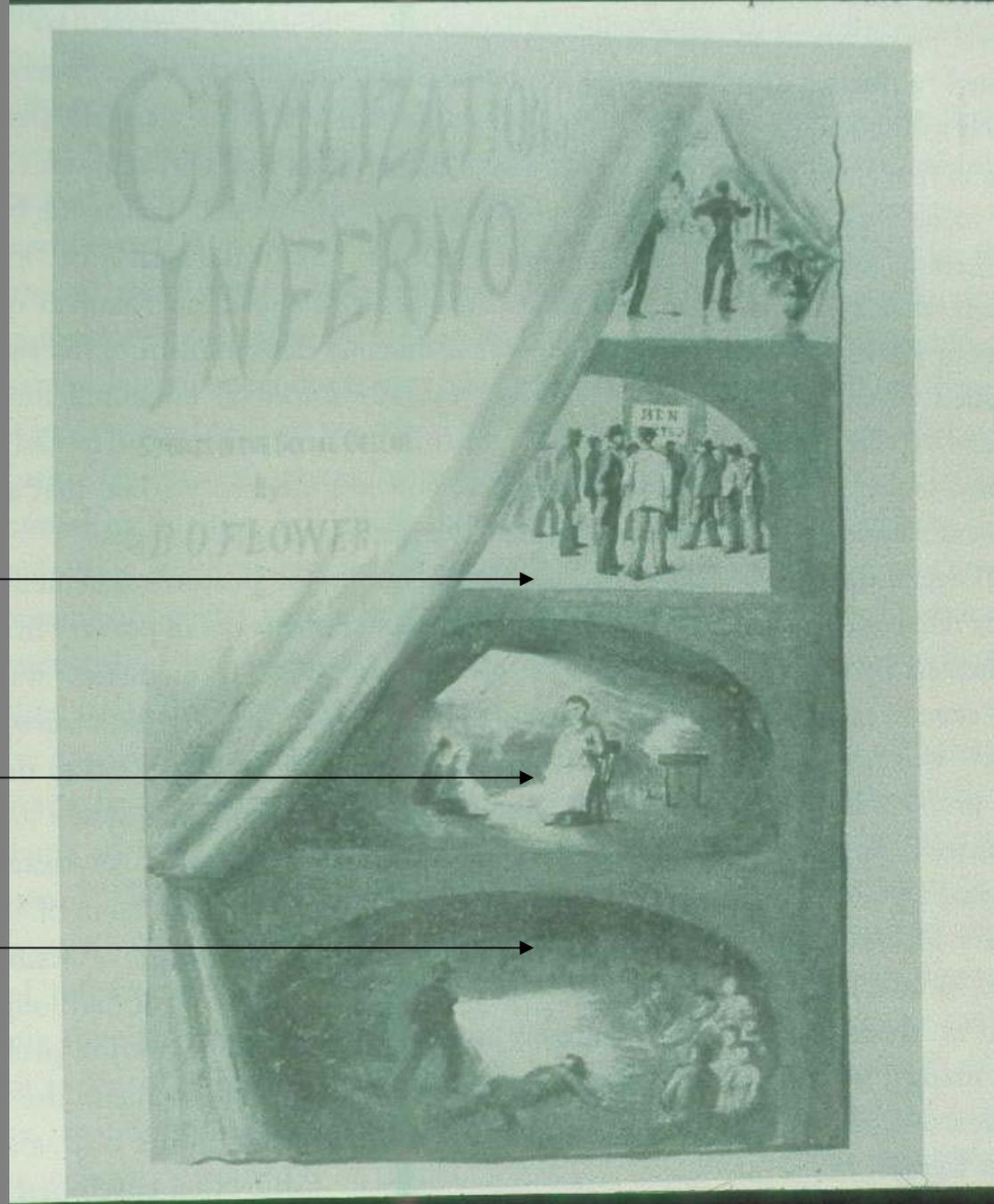
House of Industry and House of Correction, South Boston, ca. 1825.

Depiction of the  
classes showing

the working poor  
higher than

poor mothers,  
higher than

the poor who have  
succumbed to vice.



# The Boston Housing Authority

- The Power and Limits of Social Reform and Environmental Determinism
- Evolution of a Troubled Institution: From High Hopes ... to Collapse/Receivership...to Partial Recovery

- **Early Public Housing:**

Optimism

Open-ness

Opportunity

3 Public Neighborhoods  
(in red)

Commonwealth in  
Brighton

West Broadway in South  
Boston

Franklin Field in  
Dorchester

Larry Vale, 11.201 Lecture 4



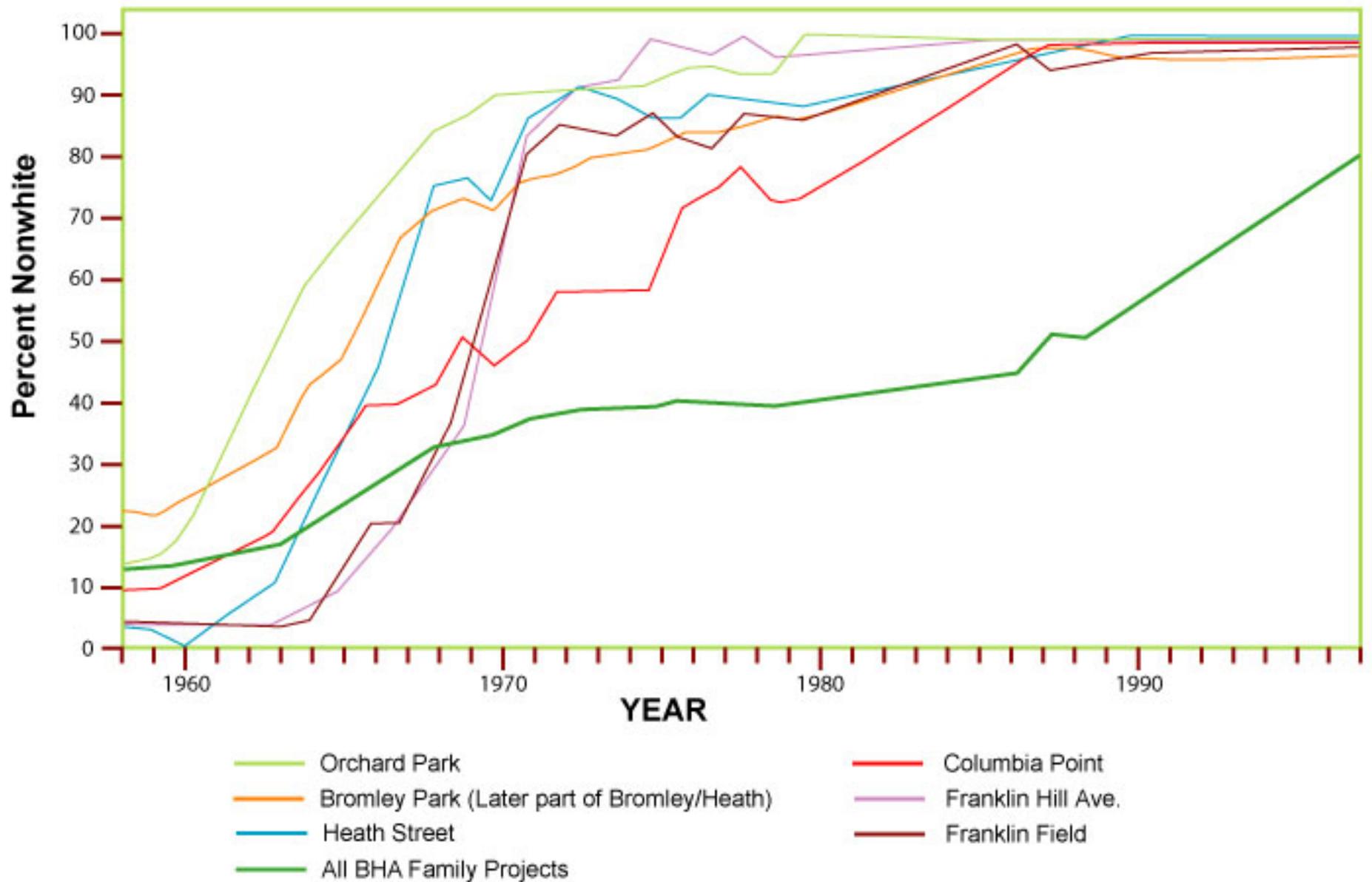


Although the racial composition of Boston family public housing shifted dramatically toward non-white occupancy, especially in the 1990's, the racial change was by no means experienced evenly or equally. Instead the pattern of racial change took four forms, as follows:

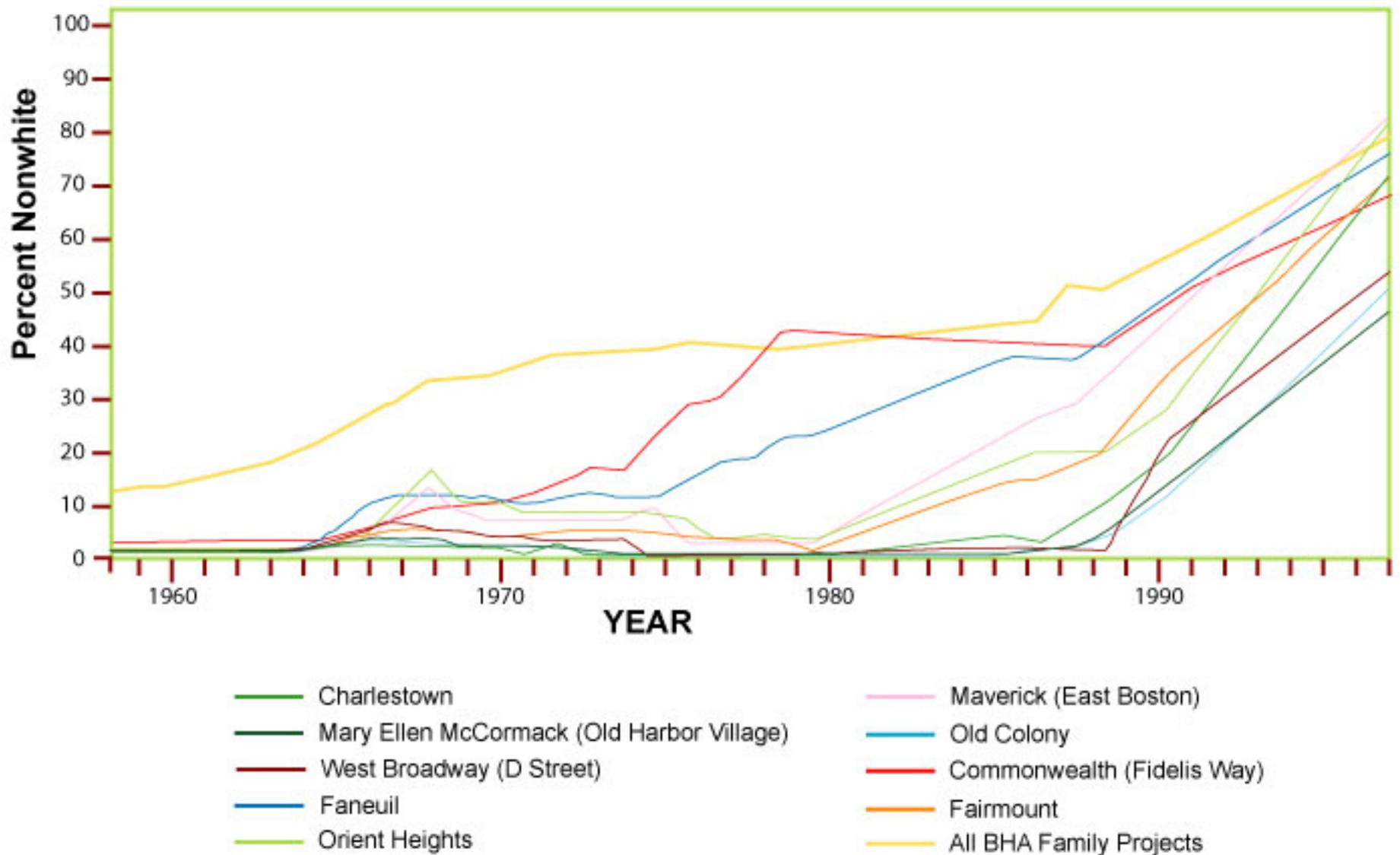
a) The gradual progression of these five projects toward non-white occupancy closely resembled that of the Authority as a whole.



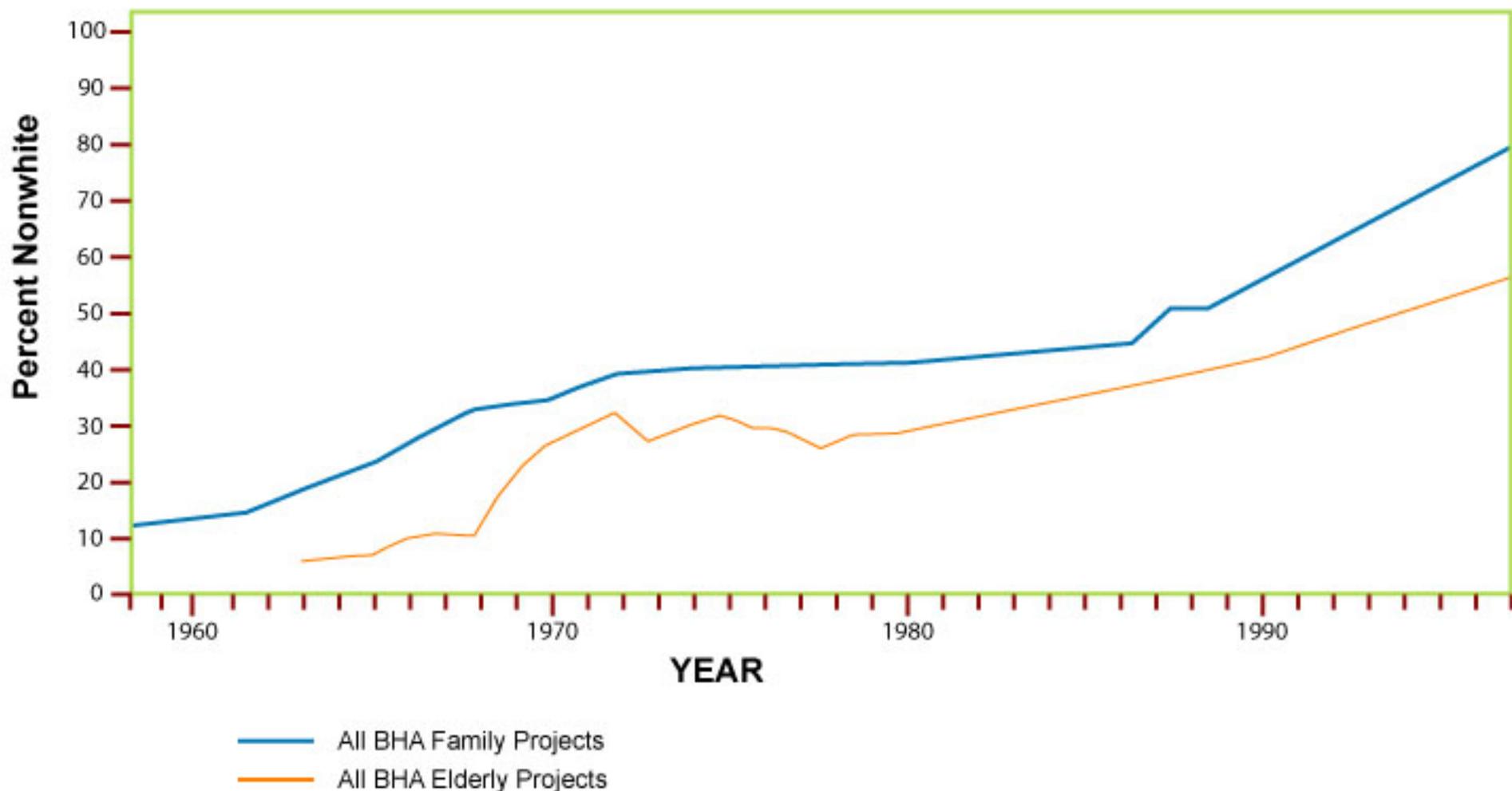
These four projects were intended for minority occupancy right from the start (Lenox Street, Camden Street, Whittier Street, and Mission Hill Extension). South End / Cathedral, where a high level of integration was present in the early years, is also included in this group.



These six projects tipped rapidly from white to non-white during the 1960's (Orchard Park, Heath Street, Bromley Park, Columbia Point, Franklin Field, and Franklin Hill).



These nine projects remained mostly white the longest. All of these remained largely white into the 1990's, despite a waiting list that had become overwhelmingly non-white.



From the moment construction of public housing for the elderly began in the early 1960's it housed a markedly higher percentage of whites than did BHA family public housing. Though the disparity continued, both kinds of developments moved toward non-white majority occupancy. When the BHA went into receivership in 1980, white households occupied 60% of its family public housing and 72% of its housing for the elderly. By 1998, however, only 20% of residents of family public housing were white, and whites constituted a minority of those living in public housing for the elderly.

# Taking Collective Action to Redevelop Public Housing: Why did 1 City have 3 Outcomes?

- West Broadway (“D Street”), South Boston
- Franklin Field, Dorchester
- Commonwealth (“Fidelis Way”), Brighton

# 3 Projects, 3 Contexts

## **Commonwealth:**

Struggled to preserve integrated housing in a less integrated area.

## **West Broadway:**

Predominantly white, struggled with re-integration.

## **Franklin Field**

Struggled with disinvestment and lack of political clout.

# BHA: A New Public Mission

- “The Authority recognizes that not only its statutory responsibility but also its moral, public responsibility to accommodate low-income families in need of housing limit its freedom to reject the potentially unacceptable tenant.”

– BHA Statement, 1965

# BHA, 1965 Mission

- “Families whose standards make them unacceptable are a responsibility of the community and, so far as their need for low-rent housing is concerned, of the Authority.”

# West Broadway Environs, 1990s















38 Joyce Hayes Way













West Broadway Redevelopment,  
Finally completed, 2005





# Franklin Field Environs, 1990s













POOCHIE R.I.P.



DEDICATED  
TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
DOMINIC MOUNT  
POUENIE

STOP THE KILLING  
MORE GIL IN THE  
SAME LINE

THE LEADERS KILLING  
OF BLACK MEN MUST  
BE STOPPED  
IMMEDIATELY  
BY WHITE AND BLACK  
MEN

MORE BLACK MEN  
WERE KILLED  
IN ROXBURY IN 1990  
THEN IN THE GULF  
WAR

IS THE BLACK  
MAN AN  
ENDANGERED  
SPECIES

IT'S GOTTA STOP

# Commonwealth Environs, 1990s



# Revitalization by Design













A photograph of a residential area. In the foreground, a black octagonal sign on a wooden post stands on a grassy area. The sign has white text that reads: "COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT", "Resident Parking ONLY", "STICKER REQUIRED", "VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED", and "AT OWNER'S EXPENSE". The sign is positioned next to a concrete sidewalk that runs along a paved road. To the left of the sidewalk is a large tree and a brick building. In the background, there are more brick buildings, a street lamp, and a car parked on the road. The sky is overcast.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT  
**Resident Parking  
ONLY**  
STICKER REQUIRED  
VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED  
AT OWNER'S EXPENSE



WELCOME TO OUR  
COMMUNITY ROOM  
RULES:

NO: CUSSING, FIGHTING, JUMPING  
ON TABLES, GROPING, STEALING,  
BALLPLAYING, DRINKING, SMOKING,  
THROWING, SPITTING, TEASING, RUNNING  
1 WARNING, THEN YOU MUST LEAVE ON #2

MADE BY:

STEVEN

MARQUIS

RAYSHAWN

BUBBA

TYRONE P.

TYRONE F.

What to do?

Raze all public housing?

# What to do? Rebuild Housing/Replace Tenants

- Who should benefit from redeveloped public housing?

# For Next Time...

- Read Friedmann “Planning as Social Reform” (Chapter 3)
- “Ask-the-Expert” session, joined by  
Phil Thompson, local politics of housing policy (NYC focus)  
Xav Briggs, federal politics of housing policy (HUD focus)  
Larry Vale, Q+A on Boston public housing as “social reform”