



Voyages of Women

A walk through the neighborhood of

Roxbury in Boston, celebrating women

of the past and present.

Developed by students of the

Dearborn Middle School.

Voyages of Women

We are a group of twelve young women in the seventh grade at the Dearborn Middle School in Roxbury. For five months, we met weekly to explore the role of women in the community around our school. We walked and talked, investigated and researched, listened and learned, interviewed and took notes and photographs.

This pamphlet shares our discoveries with our families, friends and neighbors. "We found out about people and places in our community that we never knew, like Melnea Cass, Phillis Wheatley and the convent," say

Akia, Christy and Stephanie. As part of the project, we made a banner which Christina says "shares the positive things that women did in our community." Keonda was interested in how the nuns in the convent "keep



Phillis Wheatley

praying for our community." Iesha liked the Unity Mural because it "says a lot about Dudley" and portrays people who have improved the neighborhood. Josephina was interested to learn that the Dearborn used to be a girls' high school. Evelyn adds that it was "fun going to these places and taking pictures." And all agree that visiting Mrs. Daniels, a longtime community activist, was a real high point. "I really admire her accomplishments," says Eluneida.

So join us on our voyage—discover some of the women of Roxbury of the past and present—and celebrate their achievements, great and small. Maybe you'll learn things you never knew, too! ☺

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A project of the Dearborn Middle School,
Boston Public Schools
35 Greenville Street • Roxbury MA 02119

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Pamphlet: Gretchen O'Neill

Thanks to...

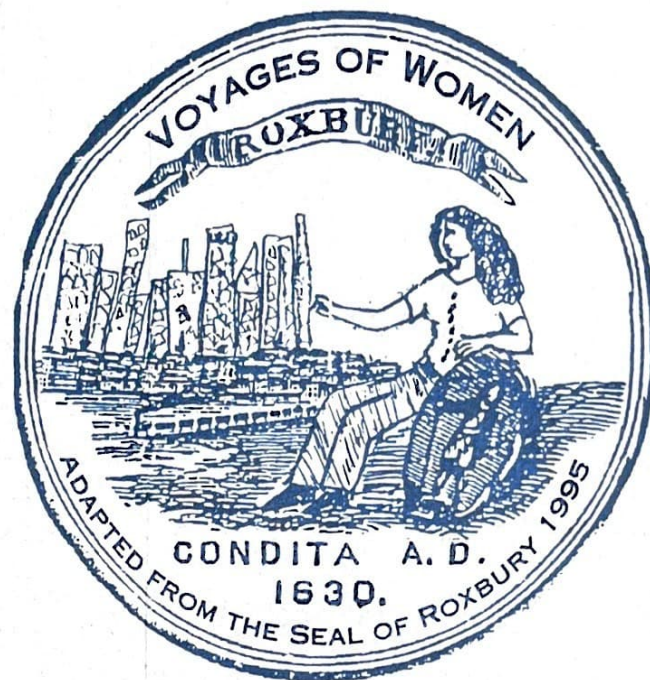
Roxie Coicou • Mildred Daniels • Barbara Elam
Alfreda Harris • Meg Howland • Kate McShea
Sarah Ann Shaw • Jean Shields • Sr. Mary Claire
Sr. John Julie • Sr. Mary Elizabeth • Joyce Stevens
Denise Thornhill • Liza Veras

Voyages of Women Participants

Tiffany Bowden	Jasmine Hernandez
Stephanie Brown	Akia Jenkins
Christina Cummings	Evelyn Maiden
Iesha Fernandes	Nancy Martins
Keonda Fisher	Josephina Pires
Christy Harrison	Eluneida Rocha

For information: ☎ 617-522-2872

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1 THE WHEATLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



The Wheatley Middle School is named after Phillis Wheatley [c.1753-1784], one of the earliest African-American poets. She was kidnapped in Africa when she was seven years old and brought to Boston. She learned Latin and wrote her first poem at age 11. A book of her poems was published in London in 1773.

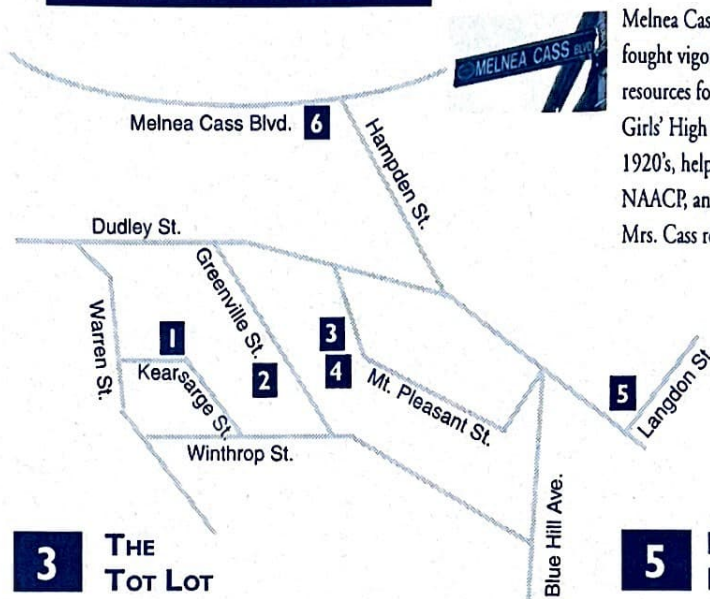
2 THE HIGH SCHOOL OF PRACTICAL ARTS AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

"Erected by the City of Boston. Dedicated to the education of girls. Anno Dom. 1912." This is the inscription on the Dearborn Middle School, which began its "life" as the High School of Practical Arts. It prepared girls "to meet the problems of life, inside the home and in the business world, in a dignified and intelligent manner." All girls took classes in cooking, laundry, sewing, nursing, and home economics, as well as regular academic subjects.



After the High School of Practical Arts closed, the building became the new home of Girls' High School—the first high school for girls in Boston. The school opened in 1852 in downtown Boston with 100 students, moved to the South End in 1870, and then to 35 Greenville St. in 1954. The present library is dedicated to Julia Buck, Class of 1887, who served as secretary of the school from 1908-1928. When she died in 1928, she left a small legacy to the school.

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3 THE TOT LOT

The Tot Lot is a pleasant and very special park because it brings the community together. The park has a good history. Every year in the summer, Ms. Daniels, who runs the park, opens the gates for the community to enjoy themselves in peace without worrying about violence. The land for the Tot Lot was donated by the Carmelite Convent next door.

4 CARMELITE CONVENT

The Carmelite Convent is down the street from the Dearborn. It has been there since 1896. A convent is a church and a house put together. The women that we saw there were very wise. The nuns stay inside the convent, grow crops in their back yard, and pray for the community to be safe and clean. Working with Ms. Daniels, they gave the land for the Tot Lot next to the convent. Their door is open all the time. We think that no matter what happens, the convent will always be around.



6 MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD

Melnea Cass [1896-1978], known as the "First Lady of Roxbury," fought vigorously and successfully for the improvement of services and resources for Boston's black community for over 60 years. A graduate of Girls' High School in 1914, she encouraged women to vote in the 1920's, helped found Freedom House, was president of the Boston NAACP, and demonstrated for integrated public schools in the 1970's. Mrs. Cass received many awards and honors, was named Mass.



"Mother of the Year" in 1974, and even met Queen Elizabeth. In 1981, a new thoroughfare—Melnea Cass Boulevard in Lower Roxbury—was named in her honor.

5 DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE MURAL

If you're around Dudley Street near Davis Supermarket, take a look at the big mural and find a friend to talk about it. It's the Unity Mural, created by Dudley area kids working with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). Its sign says "Unity Through Diversity." Ms. Daniels, whom we visited, is in the mural. DSNI, which includes people from many cultures, is working to organize, control and develop the vacant land in the neighborhood. The people have cleaned up trash and helped create new housing.

