



A brief history of Malden High School

(Condensed from the Malden High School 150th Anniversary Celebration commemorative magazine).

Malden, established as a town in 1649, opened its first free grammar school in 1665. It wasn't until 1857 that the town set up its first public high school, in one room at the Centre District School on Pleasant Street. Under the supervision of Mr. Joseph H. Noyes and one assistant, Miss Abbie L. Woodford, the first class of 38 pupils grew to 53 during the year.

In 1859, to accommodate a growing student population, the school was moved to two rooms in the "Town House," an ultimately unsatisfactory location below a dance-meeting hall and above an unsavory "lock-up" for miscreants.

With the number of students and courses of study continuing to grow over the next decades, a new high school was built in 1872 on Salem Street in the center of town, accessible to all Malden neighborhoods. The school for much of that time was under the guidance of headmaster Mr. Charles A. Daniels. When Daniels became superintendent of schools in 1884, Mr. George F. Gay

began his term as principal, introducing many new courses and reforms, including not closing the high school for storms unless it was a “blizzard.”

All the while the population continued to grow, and new facilities were needed. By 1896, Malden had a new red-brick building serving at first 512 scholars. That increased to 552 over the next six years. Expansion and renovations brought new buildings at the high school; with the old high school being razed in 1938 to make room for what is now the Donald E. Brunelli building.

In 1915 the school Paper, the Blue and Gold, was first published and Thornton Jenkins became the principal of the high school. MHS students went off to war while others helped with the war effort at home. Following World War I students who worked in industry now returned to the classroom and the high school population increased. This necessitated afternoon sessions. It was during Mr. Jenkins tenure that student lockers were added to the school and caps and gowns were introduced for graduation.

With the Second World War looming, a new high school building was dedicated in 1939. The war once again saw students and teachers alike leaving the classrooms to defend their country by joining the military or taking jobs in industry.

Jenkins remained as headmaster until 1943, when Mr. John B Mathews took over. The new atomic age ushered in new political, world and social problems as well as technological and scientific advances that had to be addressed by education, and Malden High participated in every aspect.

The school had come a long way from 1857, when a dozen subjects were taught to 60 pupils. By 1957, there were 71 teachers preparing 1,500 students for the complexities of the high-tech age.

The fabulous '50s gave way to the psychedelic '60s and the '70s, when the dress code was dropped and Latin was no longer required in the college course.

Mr. Arthur Boyle became headmaster in 1970, replacing Mr. F. Champlin Webster. Boyle helped restore a sense of optimism after the "tune in, turn on and drop out" decades.

In time the aging red brick building was torn down to make way for what is now the Holland Building, the old Brunelli Building was modified, and a new building was constructed and named after Boyle, who had an untimely death in 1984.

The new facility featured elevators, a swimming pool and two cafeterias. It was the early '80s, and more than 2,500 students were enrolled. Mr. John Wright became principal in 1984 and served until 1998. Peter Leuke succeeded Mr. Wright. He resigned in 2003 and was succeeded by Dana F. Brown, the current principal.

Malden High School is one of the oldest public high schools in the United States, and in 2007 it celebrated the 150th anniversary of its founding. More than 1,000 alumni returned, some from Alaska and Hawaii, to participate in all or part of a three day celebration. Principal Brown and Master of Ceremonies, Dr. George Holland welcomed more than 600 who gathered for a gala dinner on Saturday evening in the school gymnasium. It was a time to share memories and honor the oldest returning alumni from the classes of 1928 and 1929.

MHS is currently undergoing 77 million dollars in renovations that will bring the most current technology into the classroom and the science labs into the 21st century. A 4.4 million dollar restoration of the Jenkins Auditorium has just been completed, and this art deco jewel has been returned to its former glory. These

renovations have been made possible with funding from the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Bureau.

In the classrooms and corridors of today's Malden High School, there is a sense of optimism and confidence. With a student body that represents individuals from more than fifty nations, its diversity is also its strength. The school reflects our global "village," and the traditions of school spirit and academic excellence that have been so much a part of Malden High's history for more than 150 years continue.

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