

# The 'white flight' in Boston

## School enrollment off a third since '74 busing order

By JOHN KIFNER  
New York Times Service

BOSTON — Since the beginning of court-ordered busing for school desegregation two years ago, Boston's public schools have lost at least 17,750 white students, nearly a third of the white enrollment.

The enrollment figures for the past five years indicate that there has been a slow, steady decline of about 3,000 white students a year attributable to various demographic factors that suddenly and sharply accelerated

after Federal District Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr., finding that the Boston school committee had deliberately maintained a segregated system, ordered busing in June 1974.

The departure of white students here is expected to be a major factor in the rapidly growing and politically charged national debate over whether busing is leading to "white flight."

At the same time, the experience here must also be evaluated in terms of purely local conditions, primarily Boston's history of parochial, ethnic neighborhoods in the decade of antidesegregation politics practiced by the elected, all-white Boston School Committee.

### Private schools set up in white neighborhoods

As the end of the fall terms approaches, Boston's second year of school desegregation presents a mixed picture.

There is continued resistance and racial hostility in the South Boston neighborhood, increased last week by Judge Garrity's order putting the high school there into "receivership." But there is a weary truce in areas troubled in the past.

There is a departure of many middle-class whites from the school system. But there is also a sense of excitement and innovation — rare in the Boston schools — among the black and white parents, children and teachers who have committed themselves to the new "magnet schools."

At this moment, however, probably the most striking development has

been the drop in white enrollment, which more than accounts for the drop in the school system's enrollment from 93,647 in the fall of 1973 to 76,461 pupils this fall.

Private antidesegregation academies, following a Southern pattern, have been established in some white neighborhoods for white students. Many more have enrolled in Roman Catholic parochial schools in the city and nearby suburbs. Some have gone to other established private schools. A number have simply dropped out of school.

The change has shifted what had been a predominantly white school system to one in which the majority is now non-white.

And, significantly, the greatest decrease in the white enrollment and the greatest shift in percentages is in the lower, younger grades.

In the fall of 1973, there were 63,593 white students in the kindergarten through 12th grade, according to the Boston School Committee figures. There had been 62,014 white students in 1970, 59,390 in 1971 and 56,893 in 1972.

In the fall of 1974, with the first stage of desegregation plan which primarily affected the white South Boston and Hyde Park and the black Roxbury and Mattapan neighborhoods, the white enrollment fell to 44,957.

This fall, with the city-

wide desegregation plan in effect, the white enrollment dropped to 36,243.

The black enrollment — at least according to the school department figures — has declined slightly over these years, going from 31,963 in 1973 to 31,737 in 1974 and standing today at 31,092.

### Greatest drop in enrollment in lower grades

In addition, the number of Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students has shown small, steady gains and today stands at 9,126 up from 8,091 in 1973.

In the high schools, whites are still in a slim majority, with 10,071 white students and 9,674 non-whites. In the middle schools, there are 9,366 non-white students and 8,099 whites. In the elementary schools, there are 18,865 non-whites and 12,102 whites.

There are some difficulties with the figures, which represent the school department's projected enrollment. A number of sources say that in the past the overall enrollment figures have been regularly inflated in order to get more federal money.

However, while the projected enrollment for grades 1 through 12 (kindergarten students are not affected) is 72,201, only

some 68,175 have ever shown up at school at least once.

This would appear to indicate that the actual rate of white departure might be even more than the school department's projected enrollment figures show.

In addition, it appears that the unrelenting tension and hostility, particularly at South Boston High School, is driving many black students to either transfer or drop out. While the projected black enrollment at the high school's main building was 432 at the beginning of the year, nowhere near this number has ever attended, and frequently of late there have only been a little over 100 blacks.

### Tension forcing many blacks to leave schools

For whites in Boston, thus far, the avoidance of desegregation appears to have meant leaving the

public school system rather than "white flight" from the city's neighborhoods.

At least four private, neighborhood academies have been set up. State education officials have complained the schools are unaccredited and that students who attend them should thus be considered truant, but so far local school officials have taken no action.

Some 400 students are enrolled in the South Boston Heights Academy, a project of the neighborhood's antibusing forces. One Sunday last fall, South Boston residents trooped through an open house tour of the neat rooms with the students' work pinned to the walls and vowed continued defiance of the court order.

Other schools some with curriculums reflecting the hostility toward what is regarded as "liberalism" in the working class neighborhoods have been set up in the Hyde Park, Dorchester and East Boston sections.

## Robber kills 2, injures 3 at center for disabled

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — A man entered a home for handicapped persons in an apparent robbery attempt Sunday, killed two staff workers and injured three other persons, police said.


A blind woman managed to get away and call police, but before officers arrived the intruder fled from Bethesda Center, a converted motel for about 30 handicapped persons, officers said.

Thelma Eloise Lehman, 48, who was partially blind, was stabbed to death and Delta Post Bemis, 59, was killed with a bullet in the face.

Mrs. Bemis' husband, Joseph, 62, was shot in the head. The blind woman, Joy Denise Castlen, 22, was severely beaten. Both were reported in serious condition at a local hospital.

Treated and released from the hospital was Gary Jackson Reach, a cerebral palsy victim who was beaten in the face by the intruder's fists until he was unconscious.

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### Man shoots psychiatrist

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who went to a Brooklyn children's home to inquire about his son shot a psychiatrist in the head there Sunday and exchanged shots with police before surrendering, authorities reported.

The man got into an argument with Dr. Arthur Teller during a family psychotherapy session at the Ohe! Children's Home and shot him. He then fired shots out a second-floor window when police approached but a short time later surrendered.

Teller was hospitalized in critical condition.

The man, whose name was not revealed, and his two sons, aged 2 and 3, had taken part in previous sessions. Both boys are in foster homes, authorities said.

### Stereo equipment taken from home

Stereo equipment valued at \$460 was taken from the home of James Knox, 3819 Pine Ave., by burglars who pried a rear door to enter, Long Beach police said Sunday.

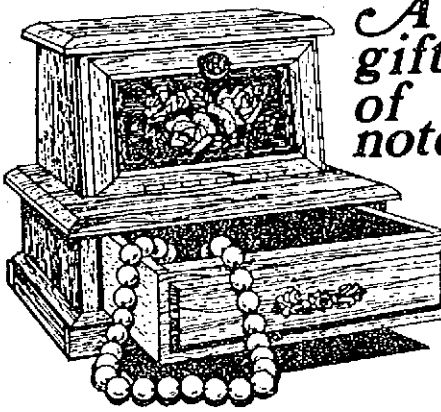
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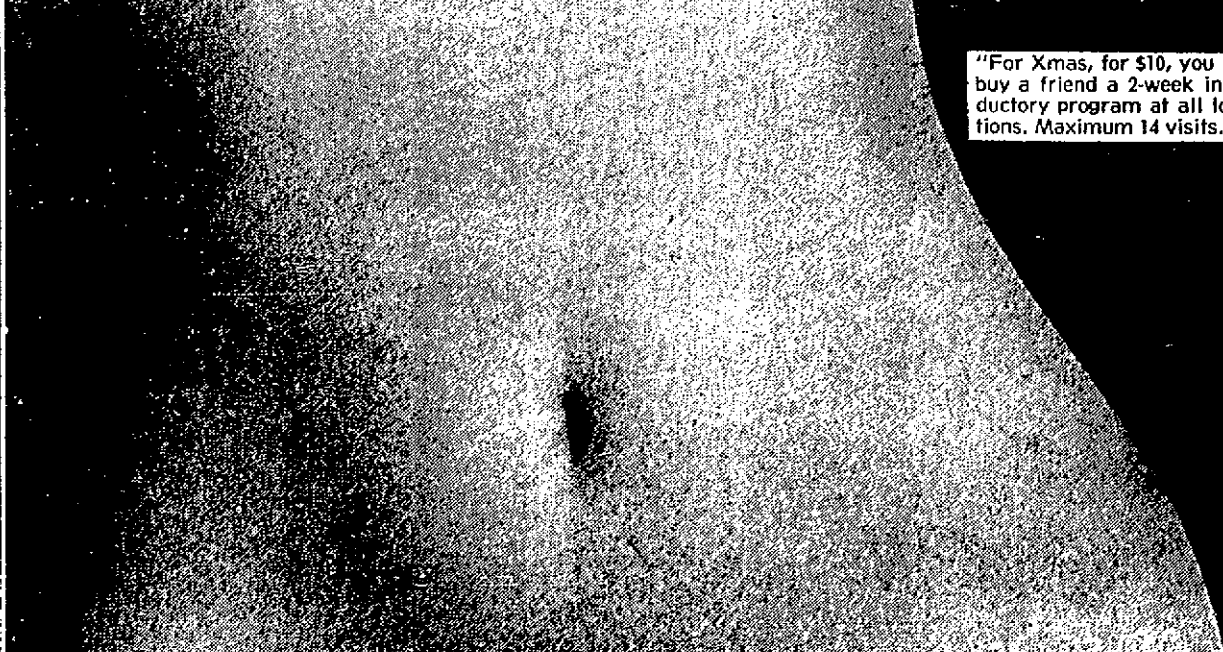
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