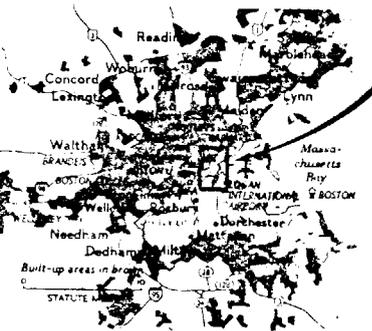


"Hub of the universe," Bostonians call their city, magnifying Oliver Wendell Holmes's more modest assessment that its State House was "the hub of the solar system." Originally a scrawny neck of land poking seaward, Boston fished out during the 19th century as developers filled in the marshy acreage of Back Bay and the South End. Foundations for the city's schools, hospitals, and great financial institutions were laid then or strengthened.

Annexing communities like East and South Boston, Charlestown and Roxbury, Boston left independent-minded neighbors such as Cambridge and Brookline to themselves. Today an encircling ring of a hundred cities and towns dwarfs Boston proper, whose 660,000 people are only part of the more than three million inhabitants in the metropolitan area.



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... can be blown out in the evening breeze, sails slide across the Charles River Basin below Beacon Hill and the towers of downtown.

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