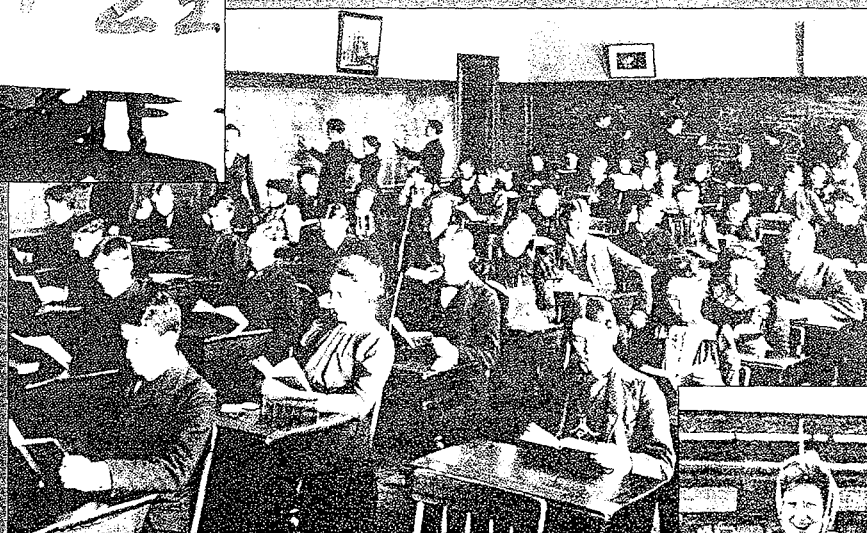
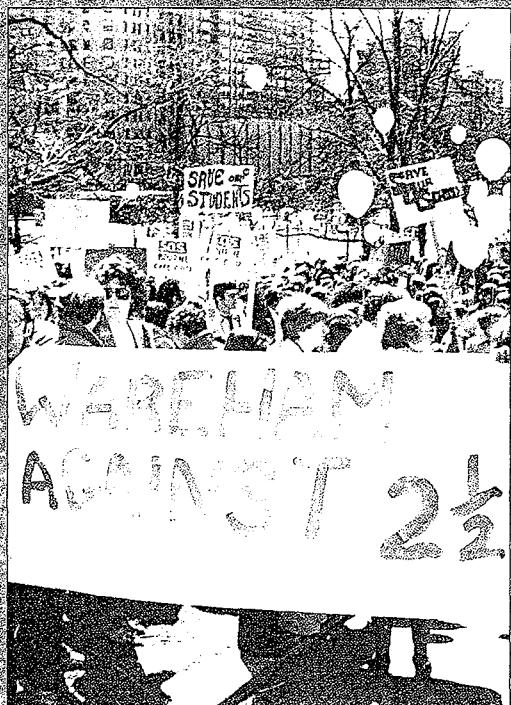


THE FACES & VOICES OF
THE MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Celebrating 150 Years of History



THE FACES & VOICES OF MTA

Celebrating 150 Years of History

INTRODUCTION

WE PRESENT HERE A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS Teachers Association. It is neither scholarly nor definitive; it is, we hope, informative, interesting, amusing – and inspiring. It recounts a struggle for quality education and professional empowerment which continues to this day.

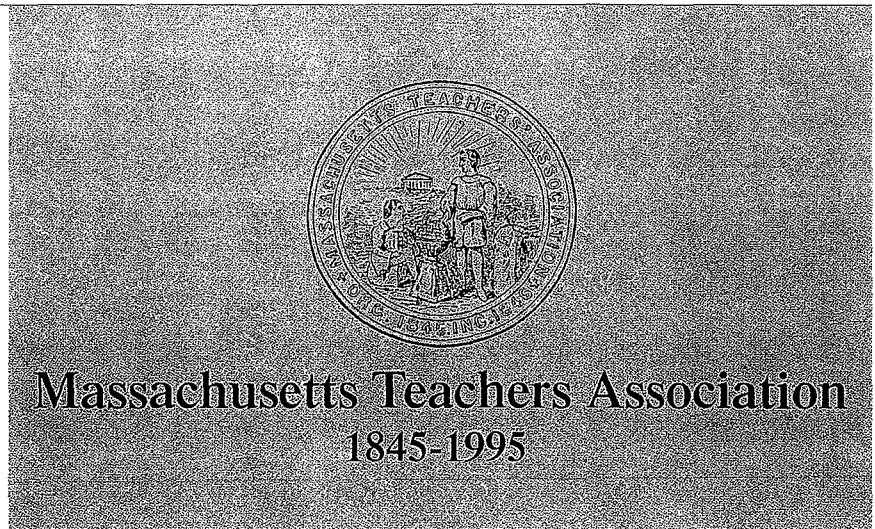
We have included the authentic voices of our past, extracted from our publications and other documents. We honor the people who spoke, wrote and lived these words. We strive to be their worthy successors and hope that when the history of MTA is updated, our contributions will be looked upon with the same pride and respect.

Robert J. Murphy

MTA President

Elvoid B. Mayers

MTA 150th Anniversary Committee Chair

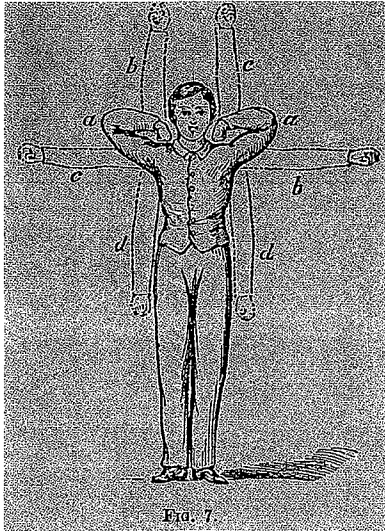


The original seal of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, 1845. In the center of the circle is a kneeling student and a robed teacher in Grecian garb. The teacher's hand rests on a globe of the world. In the background is a Greek temple of learning from which light radiates.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

An Introduction To Progressive Ideas

1845 - 1899



An illustration from *Manual of Gymnastic Exercises* by Samuel W. Mason, Master of Eliot School Boston. This book received an enthusiastic review in an 1863 issue of MTA's journal, *The Massachusetts Teacher*.

ON NOVEMBER 24TH, 1845, AT THE BEHEST OF THE ESSEX COUNTY Teachers Association, eighty-five educators from across the state met in Brinley Hall in Worcester to found the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

The meeting was called for Worcester because, even then, teachers from the west argued that too many statewide activities were held in Boston.

From the beginning, it was an organization with a passion for the profession. Consider these voices from MTA publications of the 1840's:

"The opinion of one experienced schoolmaster is worth infinitely more than that of a hundred theorists. Let us have no more plans of education from those who have never educated."

"If the public expects men of ability, men of education, men of high moral worth, to take charge of their schools, they must not expect it without liberal remuneration."

The educators who founded MTA were men of their time. The constitution of 1846 provided membership to "practical" male teachers for a fee of one dollar, while "practical" female teachers could be only honorary members. Nevertheless, MTA continually pointed out the inequities of a system which paid female teacher salaries far less than their male counterparts, and even less than those of cooks and seamstresses. When a woman was proposed to head the State Normal School at Framingham – now Framingham State College – but was offered less than her male predecessor, MTA fumed:

"It is a gross injustice ... If the principalship of the State Normal School is worth three thousand dollars, as without doubt it is, then pay that sum to the incumbent, be it man or woman."

MTA also sneered at "school systems in which female teachers are seldom employed, and ignorant men are preferred to competent females."

Throughout the century, MTA fought for such progressive ideas as new technology for the classroom, physical fitness programs for students, special education for the handicapped and retarded, programs to address the problem of school drop-outs (or "non-graduates," as they were then called), and a state tax to help poor school districts.

However, not all of MTA's ideas were so progressive:

"Without overrating the value of corporal punishment as a means of discipline, or underrating its difficulties and objections, it is the conclusion of all wise and practical teachers that the time has not yet come when it can be altogether dispensed with."

"The child that is a pest at home will be a pest at school."

"The great objection to smart children is that when they commence having whiskers, they leave off having brains. Boys that are philosophers at six years of age are generally blockheads at 21."

The concerns of MTA and its members went far beyond the borders of Massachusetts.

In 1857, when the National Education Association was formed, the committee of three which drafted its constitution included MTA member D.B. Hagar, principal of Salem Normal School – now Salem State College.

And when the Civil War came, MTA was enthusiastic in its support of the Union, noting proudly the increasing numbers of members who left their classrooms to join the cause:

“We hope that they will prove effective teachers in giving Jefferson Davis & Company a few lessons in geography, political economy, and on the Constitution of the United States.”

After peace was restored, MTA called for “equal rights to all men, irrespective of race or color” and denounced those who favored reconciling with the South and allowing officials of the Confederacy to return to office.

The restoration of peace meant the resumption of other battles closer to home. One common complaint of teachers continues to echo to this day:

“Our ears are often assailed with woeful lamentations over the low estimation in which the profession of teaching is held and the reluctance of the community to acknowledge education’s importance and merits.”

However, the merits of MTA were widely acknowledged. School Committees across the state dismissed schools to allow teachers to attend MTA’s Annual Meetings. One writer noted:

“The efficiency and progress of

schools depend far less upon the number of days and hours during which they are in session than upon that professional zeal and love of the teacher’s vocation which these conventions are so admirably calculated to foster and promote.”

But perhaps the spirit of MTA was best captured by a Boston journalist who described MTA’s Annual Meeting of 1865, which was held at Tremont Temple and which attracted 2,500 delegates – “the largest gathering of educators ever seen in America.”

“So inspired was the occasion, that even the silver-haired school masters felt themselves young again; and the humblest teachers held up their heads and modestly exclaimed, ‘Really, we think, after all, that we *are* somebody.’”



A classroom of the late 1800's.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Determined Member of the Education Establishment

1900 - 1930

BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, MTA WAS A FIRMLY ENTRENCHED member of the education establishment. Its members included such world famous scholars as the naturalist Louis Agassiz and psychologist G. Stanley Hall. Its conferences were attended by such notables as educator and author Booker T. Washington, and Harvard University President Charles W. Eliot.

But membership in the establishment came at a price. Many felt MTA had ceased to focus on the problems and concerns of rank-and-file educators. Thus, on February 8, 1911, Ernest McKechnie, of Somerville, gathered with fellow educators from Attleboro, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford and Newburyport, and founded the Massachusetts Teachers Federation (MTF).

Eight years later, in 1919, the MTF merged with the MTA. This revitalized MTA now organized its members by local associations, and encouraged its members to be active not only in the educational arena, but in the political arena as well. Annual Meeting delegates voted for platforms which called for curriculum innovations such as ability grouping, goal setting, electives, and closer collaboration with the state's public colleges.

MTA also demanded increased educational funding, job security, retirement benefits and "equitable salaries." Two hundred women teachers packed a hearing at the State House to support a bill demanding equal pay for equal work.

By the 1920's, MTA had scored some impressive victories:

- A retirement law that offered educators pensions for the first time;
- A tenure law that offered some minimal job security;



A classroom of the 1920's.

- A minimum salary law that put a floor under teacher earnings; and
- A state aid law that diverted a portion of state income taxes to poorer schools to equalize educational opportunity.

On the national level, a joint committee of the NEA and the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools was formed to cope with the so-called “separate but equal” education African-American students were receiving, especially in the South. One early victory of this committee was an agreement by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges to evaluate and accredit black schools. The lack of such accreditation had made it difficult for graduates to seek admittance to many colleges and universities.

But social progress was slow and the situation of female teachers seemed only to worsen. An MTA survey of 1926 found that almost 30% of cities and towns did not permit married women to teach. In Chicopee, the

school committee summarily fired all married women teachers, except those protected by tenure. And when the Hopedale School Committee’s dismissal of a married female teacher was challenged, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court came down against the teacher. Its ruling stated:

“The School Committee acted in good faith, without animosity, and for what it considered to be in the best interests of the schools.”

The Court later ruled that school committees could also fire married women *with* tenure.

If these events seem like horrors from a dark and distant time, Massachusetts educators faced other problems which we still face today. One teacher, when asked if her room was sufficiently well-ventilated, replied:

“If the air could find its way out where the water found its way in, everything would be perfect.”

A study of school buildings revealed what many teachers suspected:

“Pedagogy is one of the most

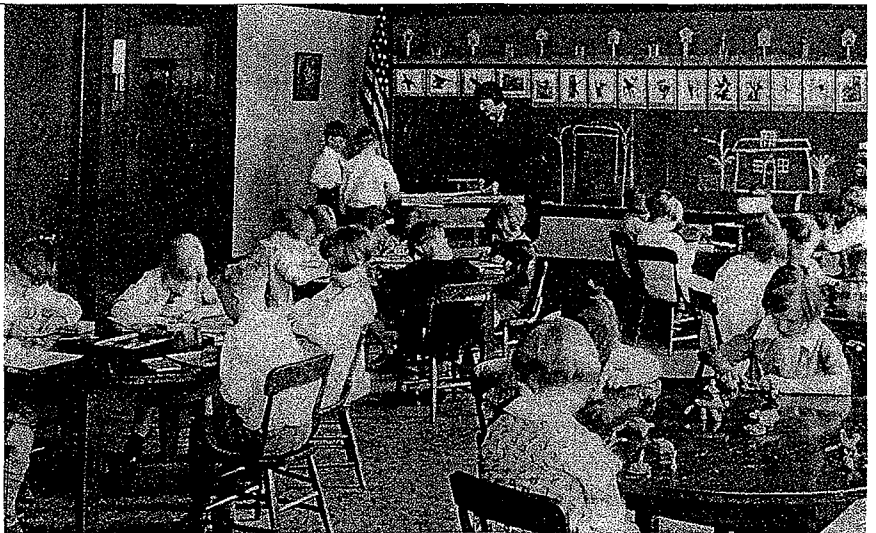
unhealthy tasks in which either landsman or landswoman can engage.”

Boston newspapers called for an investigation into school-building ventilation.

And, then as now, there was the problem of money. In 1924, MTA noted:

“The average doctor earns about \$4,000 per year; the average lawyer about \$3,000 per year; but the average teacher receives less than \$1,500 per year. When education declines, crime, corruption and anarchy flourish.”

But the problem would become a catastrophe when, on October 29, 1929, the American stock market — and the American economy — crashed.



A classroom of the 1920's.



In 1930, the MTA hired its first full-time Executive Secretary, Hugh Nixon of Melrose. He would serve for the next 34 years.

1930 - 1939

THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. BY THE MID-1930'S, MOST Massachusetts teachers suffered unilateral pay cuts of between 5 and 20%. Arlington, Attleboro, and Beverly teachers lost 10%; Framingham and Worcester teachers lost 15%; Fall River teachers lost 20%.

In Attleboro, the leadership reported:

“The Association cannot do much, since the taunt is thrown in our faces that in some towns schools are closed and Attleboro teachers are lucky to be in school at all.”

Nationwide, 2,000 schools shut down because of the Depression.

In 1930, MTA hired its first full-time Executive Secretary, Hugh Nixon of Melrose. He would serve for the next 34 years.

In the teeth of the Depression, while teachers were suffering pay cuts, Nixon rallied them:

“We must not allow the present economic depression to lead to an educational depression. Let us help mitigate the sufferings of those less fortunate than ourselves, especially the children for whom we are responsible because we are teachers.”

The teachers responded:

“Teachers in Newton, Dedham, Grafton, Everett and Framingham have voted to donate a day's pay to local relief. Fall River teachers have given 1% of their salaries; Uxbridge teachers have given 2%. Worcester teachers have raised more than \$24,000 for the poor.”

There were similar gestures of generosity across Massachusetts.

Many cities and towns did restore the cuts made to teacher salaries, but some critics of public education complained about MTA pressure.

MTA responded:

“We should not be frightened off by the tactics of vested interests who fulminate about the ‘selfish lobbies’ of teachers. When tax-dodgers begin to call us names, it is a sign that our programs are getting results.”

On a less serious note, the financial squeeze compelled MTA publications to depend heavily on advertising. Some of the ads, like those quoted below, might seem out of place in a teachers' magazine:

“Chewing gum helps keep folks well and happy! It stimulates the flow of saliva, which keeps your mouth healthfully moist.”

“In national rehabilitation ... do you know why ice cream is important? It tends to promote good nutrition. It tends to improve morale.”

“Chewing gum is an aid to clear thinking. University research is the basis of our advertising.”

1940 - 1949

IN 1938, THE SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE DETERMINED WHICH married female teachers could be supported by their husbands – and fired them. The state Supreme Judicial Court upheld the committee’s action.

However, as the Depression wound down with the decade and war began in Europe, the military began to draft young men, creating a shortage of male teachers. MTA commented:

“Some communities will soon be calling back the married women who were so unceremoniously dropped when other people wanted their positions.”

And indeed they did. As shortages developed, women stepped in to fill the void. In October 1942, MTA was able to announce:

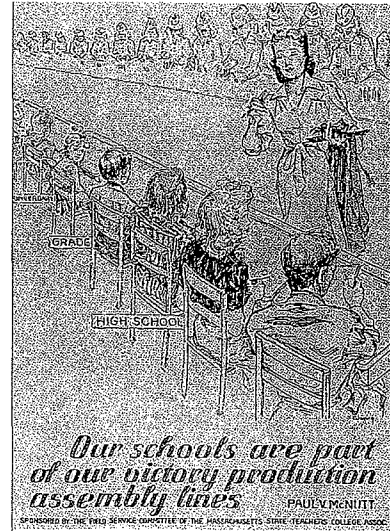
“According to our present information, a number of communities have lifted their ban against married women teachers whose husbands are in military service. The following ten communities have lifted their ban against married women even when they are not married to men in military service: Abington, Andover, Carlisle, Duxbury, Fitchburg, Holden, Lincoln, Northbridge, Rockland and Wellesley.”

In 1945, after years of lobbying by the MTA, the legislature passed an Equal Pay Law for men and women. However, the legislature left adoption of the law up to each individual city and town. Almost 20 years later, a number of Massachusetts school systems still maintained two separate pay scales.

The post-war years saw an unprecedented boom — except for educators. In a 1946 article for MTA entitled “Shall I Return to Teaching?,” a sailor who had taught in Brockton asked:

“Wouldn’t I be better off staying in the Navy? The pay is much better in the Navy, and now that the actual struggle between life and death has been removed, it is a much more leisurely life.”

A 1948 MTA Research report noted that since 1941, teacher salaries in Massachusetts had climbed 48.9%. However, the report also noted, “The cost-of-living was up 64% and average per-capita income in the state was up 119%, so teachers are still ‘behind the procession.’”



An advertisement of the 1940's in an issue of The Massachusetts Teacher sponsored by The Field Service Committee of the Massachusetts State Teachers College Association.

1950 - 1959

BY 1950, ANYONE ENTERING PUBLIC SERVICE IN MASSACHUSETTS had to take an oath vowing that he or she was not a communist. The Cold War had begun.

MTA fought to eliminate loyalty oaths and other forms of McCarthyism:

“The schools are already doing more than all other agencies combined to teach love of country through the study and appreciation of our national government, history, music and literature. Also, the daily salute to the flag and Pledge of Allegiance ought to satisfy any doubters.”

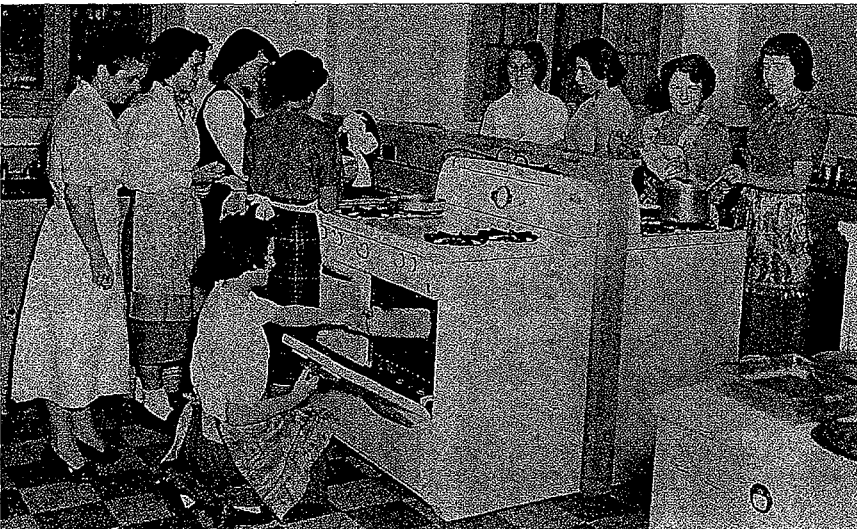
In 1951, at the behest of long-suffering teachers, MTA lobbied for and won passage of Chapter 219, a law ... “prohibiting the manufacture and sale of bean blowers.”

On a more serious note, MTA won a major victory in 1953, when Governor Christian A. Herter signed a law forbidding the dismissal of married women teachers.

One year later, Massachusetts required that all new teachers in the public schools be certified. It was a law MTA had advocated for a century. And the fact that Massachusetts was the last state in the country to adopt certification did not make the victory any less sweet.

And in 1954, one of the most important decisions ever handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court — *Brown v. Board of Education* — struck down the “separate but equal” doctrine and ordered desegregation of the public schools.

By the end of the decade, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, and Washington responded with the National Defense Education Act, pumping \$1 billion into the schools and beginning a period of unprecedented growth.



In the 1950's, girls enrolled in home economics class, while boys enrolled in shop class.

1960 - 1969

THERE WAS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. ACCORDING TO STATISTICS for 1960: "The average U.S. teacher salary is \$5,025 ... Of every 10 students in fifth grade, only six will finish high school ... Of every three students who enter high school, only two will finish ... Only one elementary school in five has a library ... And chances are nine in 10 that an elementary student will be taught by a non-college graduate."

There were great pressures for change. A burgeoning population of baby-boomers swelled classrooms and caused a nationwide shortage of teachers. A Harvard University economist told MTA: "Salaries for teachers will have to be as high as \$9,000 to attract the adequately qualified."

Teachers in Massachusetts were guaranteed a minimum salary of \$4,000. To attain raises, teachers formed Salary Committees and, armed with statistics from MTA, made their case before school committees. However, the committees were under no obligation to respond positively, or even to respond at all.

But a new generation of teachers was no longer willing to go begging, hat in hand. On Nov. 17, 1965, with newly-installed MTA Executive Secretary William H. Hebert at his side, Governor John Volpe signed Chapter 763, granting collective bargaining rights to Massachusetts teachers.

In an editorial for *The Boston Herald*, Hebert commented:

"For many years, teachers have argued with justification that they are unappreciated as professional people. Their salaries in respect to their education and responsibilities are evidence of this injustice. Now they have a chance to right this wrong."

Within two years of its implementation, more than 200 teachers' contracts were signed across Massachusetts. Within five years of its implementation, \$1 billion was added to teachers' salaries in the state.

The 1960's were also a time of powerful social change, especially in the area of minority rights and empowerment. In 1966, the American Teachers Association, a national African-American teachers group with 60,000 members, voted overwhelmingly to merge with the NEA. The ratification vote, which took place at the NEA Representative Assembly, was described by a witness:

"Every state association demanded the privilege of seconding the motion for merger. The Unification Certificate was signed by the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of both organizations while delegates sang 'Glory, Glory, Hallelujah.' A prolonged standing ovation followed the signing."

But as the 60's moved forward, external pressures once again were taking a toll on the schools. By 1967, the Vietnam War was costing more each month than the total U.S. education budget for the year. In 1968, because of the war and its costs, federal support for public education dropped for the first time since 1942.



Signing of the Collective Bargaining Law of 1965. Standing beside Gov. John Volpe is MTA Executive Secretary William H. Hebert, who had been appointed in 1964.

1970 - 1979

IN 1968, THE MTA HAD OPENED ITS BOSTON HEADQUARTERS. NOW AS the 70's began, MTA added regional offices and hired additional staff. In 1972 alone, MTA attorneys dealt with over 1,000 cases concerning teachers whose jobs were threatened.

Not all the problems faced by MTA members could be settled in court. In 1969, the New Bedford Educators Association went on strike. The judge in the case declared the school committee "equally guilty" for the crisis, but it was the teachers who paid the price, walking picket lines for nine days.

Teachers would continue to pay the price for economic justice and professional dignity throughout the 1970's. Teachers went on strike in Woburn, Brockton, Somerville, Burlington, New Bedford, Fall River, and Grafton.

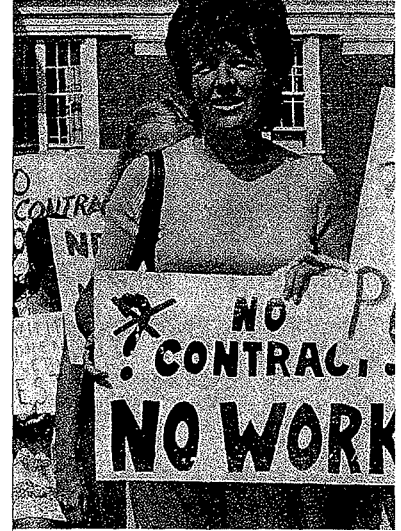
In 1977, during a two-week strike in Franklin, Superior Court Judge John M. Greaney jailed more than 80 teachers and fined the Association \$350,000.

One Franklin teacher who went to jail described her ordeal to MTA:

"We explained to the kids that their mother was going to jail. But try telling that to an eight-year-old. The first thing he wanted to know was 'how long – for a year?' I couldn't even answer him. And then there are the fines and lost salary ... I don't know what it will mean. But we'll manage. I did something I believe in very strongly, and I'd do it again – no matter what it cost."

Another jailed teacher shared his memories:

"I was settling down to sleep when another inmate yelled up from a lower tier: 'Hey, Teach, is this what you call collective bargaining?'"



Somerville teachers, who went on strike in 1972, were among several associations forced to defend the rights they had won under collective bargaining.



MTA members participating in Ride-A-Bike for the Retarded in the 1970's. Second from left is Joan Flanagan, MTA president for 1973-74.

But, MTA and its members did not only fight for justice on the economic front. In 1972, MTA reported the following statistics:

“Women presently account for only one Massachusetts school superintendent, and she is one of only two nationwide. Massachusetts women also account for only six of the state’s 354 secondary school principals. And of the women who teach in Massachusetts public higher education, only 9% are full professors.”

An MTA editorial pointed out other injustices:

“Some school systems discontinue their share of health insurance premium payments while female employees are on maternity leave, but continue to pay their share while the wives of male employees are pregnant.”

In 1973, the MTA established the Committee on the Advancement of Women in Education. Six years later it celebrated a major victory when the state Supreme Judicial Court ruled that it was unlawful sex

discrimination to exclude pregnancy from sick-leave coverage.

The 1970’s were also a time when the fight for minority rights gained new momentum.

NEA launched its Minority Involvement Program, comprising components such as Leadership Development Seminars, which created action plans to address minority concerns and offered skill-building opportunities to encourage minority participation in leadership and policy-making roles. At present, more than 6,000 minority educators have participated in the program.

In the mid-1970’s, the NEA sent a team to facilitate the first regular Minority Involvement Program for MTA. Out of this experience evolved the Black Caucus of Massachusetts.

NEA stipulated that all of its training activities must include a 20% minority involvement. NEA later extended this requirement to cover all of its membership activities.

In Massachusetts, there had been African-American teachers since the



A teacher reading to her class during a story-telling period, 1970's.



Ed and Liza Coogan, Pro-Maternity Leave Right demonstrators and MTA members, picketing a school committee meeting on Martha's Vineyard, 1974.

early 1800's, but their contributions went largely unrecognized, and their strivings for advancement were largely frustrated.

In 1979, MTA adopted its Minority Involvement Plan and established its Minority Affairs Committee, which to this day is active in programs and advocacy efforts on behalf of minority educators.

However, Louise Gaskins, a leading spokesperson for minority affairs and the MTA's first Ethnic Minority NEA Director, was quick to point out that:

"The beginning of the struggle for minority involvement in MTA did not begin in the 1970's. There are black educators who served as earlier pioneers – Reverend Doctor Robert L. Carter of Fairhaven, Girlie Davis of Springfield and many others – who must be recognized."

Gaskins also summed up the philosophy of the struggle:

"Until you let people in power know that you are interested in changing how things are, things will remain the same. Our goal is simple: we intend to catch up."

The 1970's were also a time when MTA expanded its membership base to include public higher education. It was the return to MTA of a segment of the education community which had been instrumental in founding the organization and guiding it for much of its early history. In 1974, with the passage of collective bargaining legislation, employees of public higher education were finally able to enjoy the same rights as their K-12 colleagues. One campus activist told MTA:

"What existed was basically a weak system of reaction – some faculty member would get fired, and the others would get together and hire a lawyer to defend him. Or a committee would be elected to handle the problem. But

this is changing today. Faculties are winning genuine authority in matters which affect them. The agent for this change is collective bargaining."

And the 1970's will be remembered as a time of unprecedented energy devoted to children's issues. Every year, MTA members across Massachusetts held Ride-A-Bike events, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the retarded.

The MTA used its political power to help pass some of the most important legislation of the 1970's – or any other decade:

- Chapter 622, which assured students access to all programs without regard to sex, race, religion or national origin;
- The Transitional Bilingual Education Act, guaranteeing bilingual education to students from a myriad of language backgrounds; and
- Chapter 766, guaranteeing appropriate services to the state's more than 100,000 special needs students.

1980 - 1989

IF THE 1970'S BEGAN AS A DECADE OF GROWTH AND OPTIMISM, THE 1980'S BEGAN with despair. The cataclysm of Proposition 2 1/2 placed severe limits on local property taxes – the main source of funding for public schools.

The impact was devastating. In 1981, MTA reported the following:

“These are among the signs of our times: The City of Cambridge proposes to cut 439 school employees ... The school committee in Watertown approves a recommendation that could result in the loss of a third of the town’s 310 teachers ... The Quincy School Committee votes to close five schools and lay off 226 teachers ... *The Boston Globe* reports that large numbers of parents are considering enrolling their children in private schools because of the effects of Proposition 2 1/2 ...”

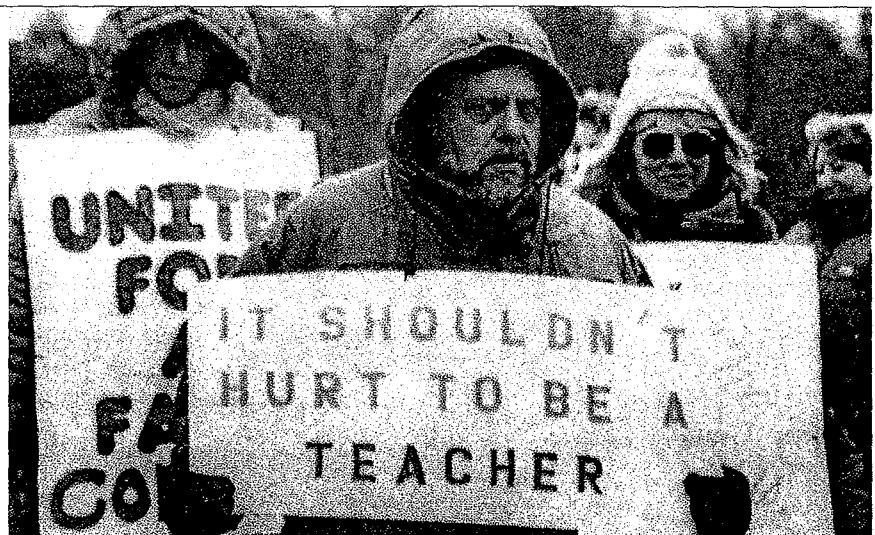
One 25-year veteran from the Berkshires wrote:

“Like an invisible thief, Proposition 2 1/2 has stolen one of my irreplaceable possessions: my career. It might have stolen my car; I could have replaced it. It might have taken my wallet; I could have found compensation. But it has taken that which I have nurtured and loved for a quarter century. I have not burned out. My zest for teaching holds energy enough for countless more years. I was put out.”

Throughout the 1980's, the MTA continued to wage a war against the budget cuts that threatened the very viability of public education.

But the challenges to public education were not only financial. Studies like “A Nation at Risk” and “The Paideia Proposal” questioned the basic assumptions of the schools.

MTA did not evade these questions. In 1984, almost 700 members gathered at a special delegate assembly at Burlington High School to hammer out reform proposals based on real school experience. MTA President Carol Doherty told delegates:



Freetown-Lakeville strike, 1989. The sign says it all.

“You’re good at what you do! Let’s tell the story of public education in a way that only you can tell it. Then let’s change public education in a way that only your commitment, dedication and understanding can change it.”

In 1985, the work paid off when Governor Michael Dukakis signed Chapter 188, the Education Reform Law, which mandated some of the most innovative and farsighted programs in the history of Massachusetts education.

To meet the new realities of the 1980’s, MTA also changed internally. With the extension of the President’s and Vice President’s terms of office, and new powers vested in the Board of Directors, MTA became an even more member-driven association.

In 1983, Edward P. Sullivan was appointed MTA Executive Director-Treasurer.

MTA also continued to press for greater minority involvement at all organizational levels, adopting an affirmative retention statement and a statewide Minority Action Plan. MTA

also mandated minority representation on all the MTA standing committees and increased minority delegate representation at the Annual Meeting. And despite the elimination of minority guarantees in the NEA Constitution, MTA has continued to elect an NEA Ethnic Minority Director.

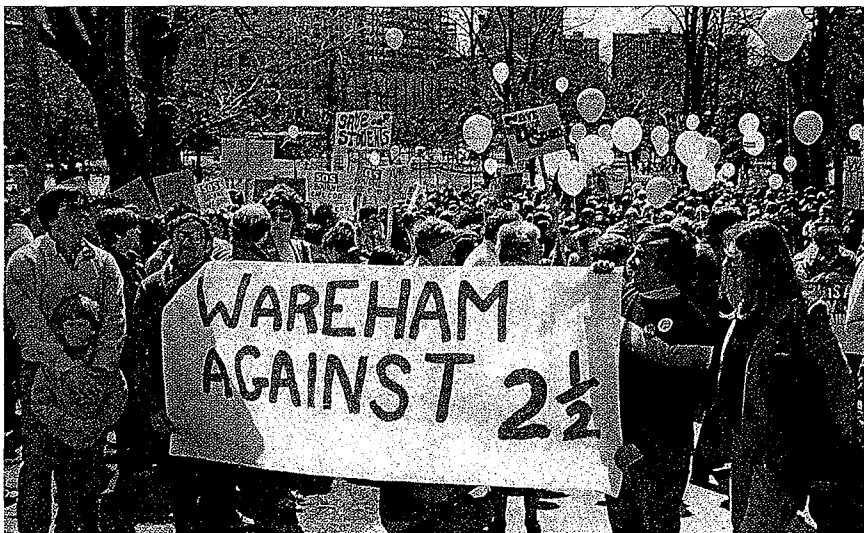
Also in the 1980’s, wall-to-wall organizing opened the union to participation by every member of the family of Massachusetts public education, including school secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, teacher aides, food service personnel, library aides, laboratory technicians, telephone operators, medical records personnel, accountants, bookkeepers, mail room clerks, computer programmers, library and reference assistants, audio-visual technicians, and others.

What didn’t change — and what hasn’t changed — is MTA’s struggle for economic justice. As in the previous decades, MTA members in the 1980’s and right up to our own day have been forced to take the ultimate step for

professional dignity. Strikes occurred in Grafton, Springfield, Plymouth-Carver, Waltham, Quincy, Tewksbury, Revere, Seekonk, Norton, Medford, Everett, Raynham, Lexington, Hudson, Sharon, Hanover, Watertown, Freetown-Lakeville, Wakefield, Beverly, Brockton, Belmont, and Holyoke.

When asked about teacher strikes by reporters, MTA President Nancy Finkelstein explained:

“Teachers are frustrated because in the midst of the Massachusetts Miracle, they have been left behind. If it is true that a rising tide lifts all ships, too many teachers are still waiting at the dock.”



A 1981 demonstration on Boston Common against Proposition 2 1/2.

1990 - 1995

A DECADE AFTER THE CATAclysm OF PROPOSITION 2 1/2, THE 1990'S began with another threat of devastation. Question 3 promised the public large tax cuts – at the expense of public schools and other public services.

This time MTA members across the state organized as never before to defeat the ballot question. This time the public agreed that mindless tax cuts would go “too far.”

It was one of the biggest victories in MTA's history.

MTA President Rosanne Bacon wrote:

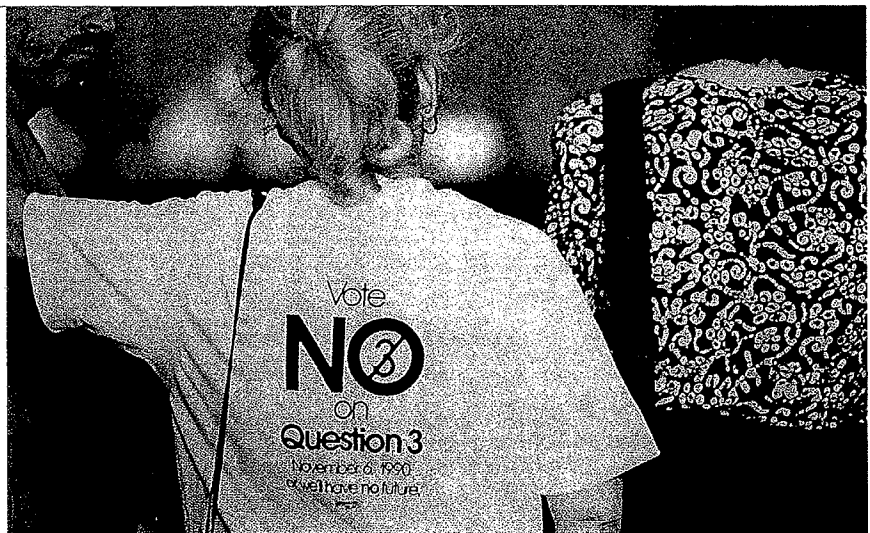
“We did it! We beat Question 3 and we did it together. It is a triumph of reason over anger. The message for us is clear. When we work together we can win!”

The MTA also took the lead in standing up to the so-called “reform” proposals of the newly elected administration of Governor William Weld and the legislature. In an unprecedented move, the MTA invited the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers to join it in developing an independent reform proposal.

The result was “The Educators Perspective,” a document of ideas which went far to improve the final provisions of the Education Reform Act of 1993.

And MTA made it clear that it would continue to stand up to the anti-education policies of the new administration when 20,000 members from across Massachusetts held the largest pro-education rally the State House had ever seen.

Today, the MTA continues to protect the public schools against the forces of unthinking privatization, religious intrusion into the classroom, and the destructive budget-cutting policies of short-sighted politicians.



Question 3, 1990. MTA's campaign to defeat the tax-cutting proposal, which would have devastated public education, resulted in one of the biggest victories in our history.

THE FUTURE

IT'S BEEN 150 YEARS SINCE THAT FIRST MTA MEETING IN WORCESTER – 150 years of challenge and struggle. We've accomplished a lot, but we still have far to go – for ourselves and for the students we serve.



The struggle continues, 1992.