

# Prospect Hill School

In 1879, as population grew, the Board of Education was authorized to construct a "suitable building" on Jackson Avenue to cost not more than \$4,000. Although originally met with disapproval, Mrs. Robert C. Black organized the women of the town behind the measure. They may have not been able to vote, but they cast their support at the district meeting and the measure passed.

The Jackson Avenue School was a two-storied, red brick building which stood on the northeast corner of Jackson Avenue and Plymouth Street. The school served the community well until the late 1920s, when "boom" days south of Boston Post Road resulted in the approval of a \$398,000 bond to build a modern educational building on the property bound by Washington and Clay Avenues near Hudson Street. Not far from the site of Pelham's first schoolhouse, it was named the Prospect Hill School in its honor. It was dedicated in October 1930 as a "memorial to the sturdy school children of the early Pelhams and as an inspiration to the youngsters of today."

"I know of no one better," said Superintendent Brown of the new school.

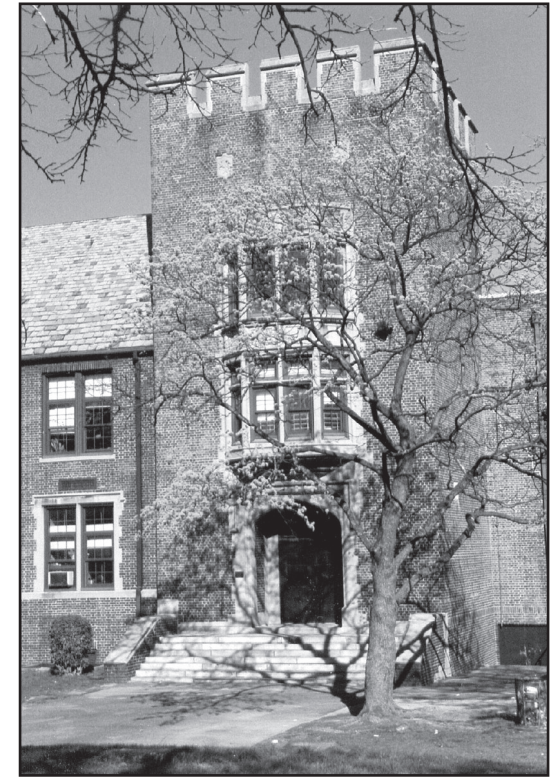
Its outstanding features included: "telephones in every room connected with a central switchboard; a Stromberg/Carlson Radio System complete with magnetic speakers and electric phonographs for use in the auditorium and gym which broadcast music appreciation and current historical events as they occurred; a large, airy gymnasium with separate boys' and girls' showers and locker rooms nearby; graduated and movable desks and chairs; suitably placed blackboards of the increasing height of the pupils; concealed clothes closets with a provision for a current of warm air to dry wet clothes on a rainy day; accessible fire hose throughout the building; drinking fountains; clinics and consultation rooms; a 700- volume library in the almost cloistered-like atmosphere of the third floor; a large kindergarten room on the main floor; and a dental and health clinic."



The Prospect Hill community recently raised more than \$100,000 for a project to renovate the auditorium. When the school was first built, officials recognized that a past practice of combining the gymnasium and auditorium "was not advantageous."



Students at the Prospect Hill cornerstone ceremony, 1928.



The cherry trees which grace Prospect Hill each spring were a gift of gratitude from the family of a Japanese boy who had completed kindergarten at Prospect Hill but was compelled to return to his homeland with his mother on the eve of World War II. Ten cherry trees were presented to the school in October 1941 in appreciation of the kindness that many people from Pelham had shown to this child.