

# GALLERY

8

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*“We are like one big fraternity, always doing things together,  
bearing each other’s burdens and enjoying each other’s happiness,  
a thing to be envied by many.”*

—“Bud” Kersting, Class of 1929

## College Life: Part I

Roger Babson is remembered in the history books as the man who predicted the stock market crash in 1929 and who ran for the presidency on the Prohibition Party ticket in 1940. The former points to his acumen as a financial wizard; the latter to the puritanical zeal with which he attacked John Barleycorn and a host of other sinful, albeit legal, enterprises. Alcohol, of course, topped his enemies' list, but he also called upon like-minded citizens to join him in a crusade to smite hip and thigh the legions of darkness that pushed legalized gambling, harmful over-the-counter drugs, deceptive advertising (his friend George Coleman coined the slogan "Truth in Advertising"), indecent publications, and violent and blue movies.

While there is much to be said in support of Babson's opinions, he tended to carry things too far in matters of this sort. For example, he had a penchant for censorship.

Roger Babson brought the first movies to the town of Wellesley, opening the auditorium of the Babson's Statistical Organization to his fellow townsmen for twice-weekly screenings. These shows proved so popular that he expanded the

enterprise by building Wellesley's first movie theater. Nevertheless, he had mixed feelings regarding the motion-picture industry. Babson's entrepreneurial side appreciated the profits to be made, whereas his puritanical side fixated on the potential for evil. It was the latter that induced Babson to arrange with the Wellesley Women's Club to appoint a censor from its ranks for the films shown in his new theater.

Lord knows, a censor was needed, if Roger Babson had his facts straight. Movies, he said, were the root cause of the crime waves that were engulfing America during the Roaring Twenties. Babson put his reputation as a statistician at risk when he ascribed to the baneful influence of the movie industry no less than 85 percent of all the crimes committed in the United States.

As with motion pictures, so too with radio. Included in the long list of firsts that Babson introduced to the town of Wellesley was radio station WBSO. The same spirit that had moved Babson to authorize censorship of objectionable films in his movie house reigned at station WBSO. As long as the station remained under his management, it



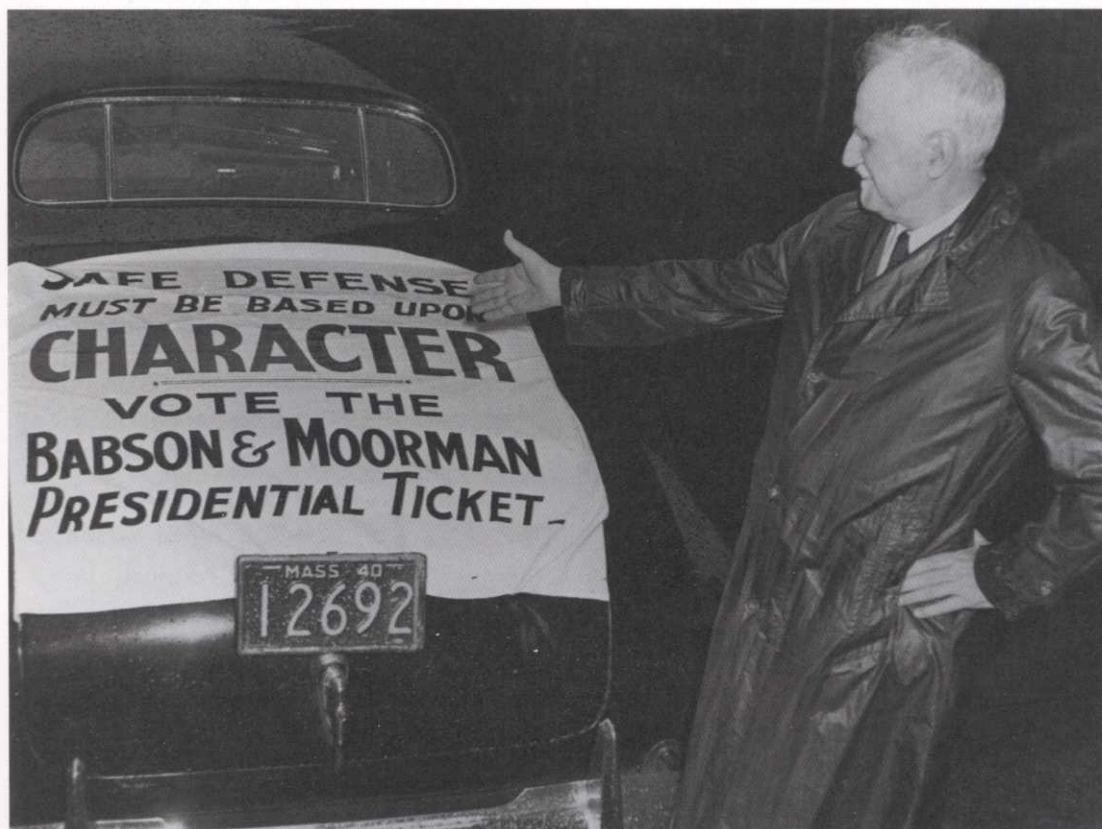
biweekly “fireside chats,” in which interested students and faculty gathered in the chapel on Sunday and Wednesday evenings to discuss religious topics. Attendance was strictly voluntary, at least for the students. Roger Babson did recruit “volunteers” from his churchgoing faculty to lead the discussions, but the students were free to come and go as they pleased, and most of them were pleased not to come.

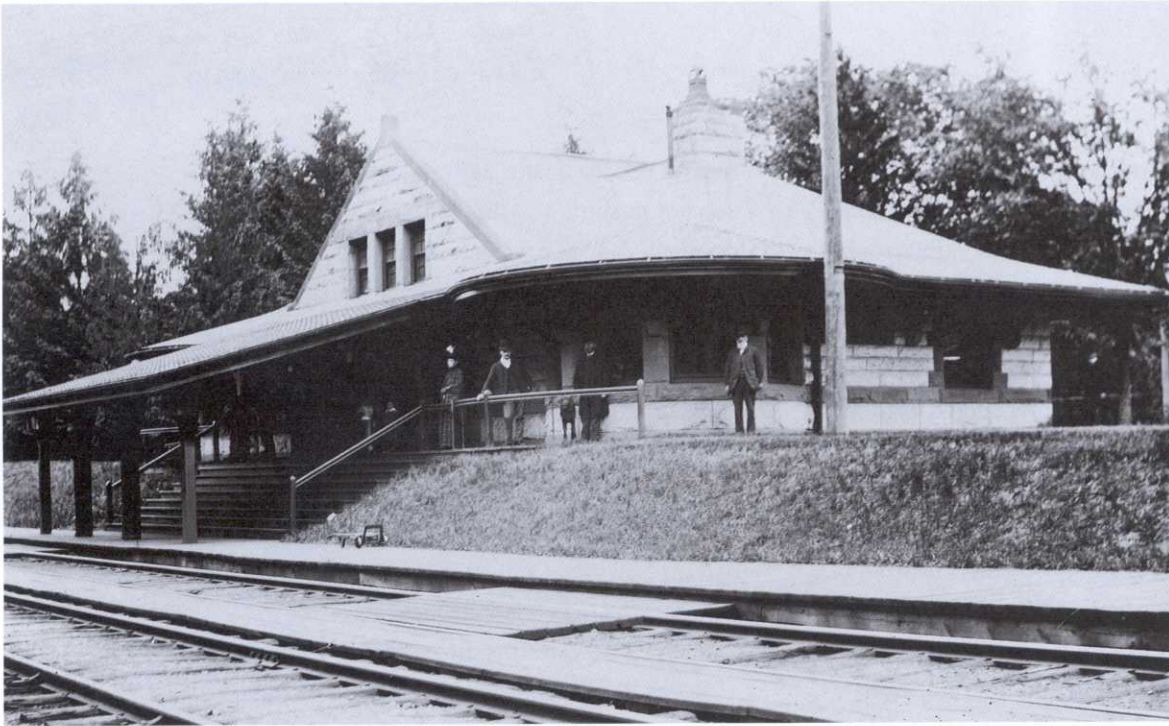
The Institute assumed a nondenominational stance—as befitted a nonsectarian school—in its campaign to bring religion into the lives of students. The Institute had no intention of proselytizing, it claimed, nor was it promoting a particular creed or dogma. The Babson Institute did not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or color, it stated. The policy, as laid down by the school, was to encourage all students—Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant alike—to get involved in their churches and synagogues. Roger Babson’s advice to the students—“See your priest, rabbi, or minister once a month”—had a nice ecumenical ring.

And yet, for all the assurances that the Institute was not pushing a particular creed or doctrine, the chaplain, chapel services, Sunday baccalaureate ceremony that was held each year in either the Wellesley Congregational Church or the Unitarian Universalist Church, and every other formal religious function or celebration on campus had a distinctly Protestant tone. It took more than forty-four years to bring the first non-Protestant service to Babson. (Credit for the breakthrough goes to the Babson Newman Club. It sponsored a Roman Catholic mass that was celebrated in the Fo’c’sle in December, 1963, with forty-five students in attendance.)

Roger Babson’s ideas regarding the spiritual renaissance that he so earnestly desired may have had a Protestant bent, but they were broad enough to embrace the world beyond Babson Park. In 1927, one of the first radio stations in the northeastern United States began broadcasting under the call letters WBSO from the Hollister Building. Operated by Babson’s Statistical Organization (thus,

*Roger Babson’s lifelong opposition to liquor was evidenced by his candidacy for president on the Prohibition Party ticket in 1940.*





*Because many Babson Institute students did not have cars, the proximity of the Wellesley Hills railroad station was a great convenience. It was only a short distance from both 31 Abbott Road and the Stuart Building, and an easy walk when the new campus opened in 1923. (Photo credit: Wellesley Historical Society.)*

the WBSO), it transmitted market reports and other financial news. Roger Babson was quick to seize upon the new medium to bring the solace of religion to the troubled and to shut-ins. He made the station available to the Massachusetts Federation of Churches to broadcast its afternoon “Good Cheer Service” and to the “Midnight Ministry” to beam the good word to night owls seven nights a week from midnight until one o’clock in the morning.

In 1929, the Federal Radio Commission granted permission to WBSO to build a new station with 1,000-watt transmission power near the Great Plain Avenue entrance to the Babson campus. The new station, at Roger Babson’s insistence, was designed in the form of a church and contained a small chapel-like auditorium with a seating capacity of forty-eight. Standing sentinel on either side of the station were twin 185-foot high antenna towers spaced 350 feet apart.

The station opened in 1930 under both old and new management. Joining the B.S.O. and the Massachusetts Federation of Churches were the

Babson Institute, Wellesley College, and Dana Hall. Fittingly, WBSO broadened its programing to include school items.

The Babson Institute’s commitment to the development of “exemplary character” and its constant drumming on the theme that lasting success came only to those who lived healthy, spiritual, and moral lives, sometimes caused it to slip over the line into practices more properly reserved to sectarian schools. It pursued its role as promoter of religion and morality with a zeal born of conviction, pushing its views right into the classroom. Instructors were under orders to encourage students, when relevant, to analyze specific ethical or moral problems associated with “liquor, gambling, petting, etc.” The Department of Personal Efficiency took that charge seriously enough to devote an entire course—“Sex, Hygiene and Alcohol”—to some of these concerns.

Roger Babson made clear in a 1922 memorandum to the Institute’s first Board of Trustees that the rules and regulations established at the outset

for governing the behavior of students would shape the destiny of the college. He wrote:

*At your meeting today it would be well to discuss two questions of policy:*

*Is the Institute to become a rescue mission for rich men's sons or is it to become a training and research institute for serious-minded men? . . . It seems to me . . . that we should definitely determine what our policy should be and be honest with the parents concerning the same.*

*Surely the sons of rich men need to be helped and straightened out. They are to inherit wealth and responsibility and the future of the country depends very largely on saving them. If, however, this is the purpose, the Institute is not a place for young men who already have good habits, as under such circumstances it is liable to do them more harm than good.*

*On the other hand, if the policy is to be followed for making it a school for business training and research for seriously-minded men, then we should insist on the same rules of conduct as we have established for [the employees of] the B.S.O. . . . As soon as a boy is found under the influence of liquor or with liquor in his possession, or doing other things for which he would be discharged at the B.S.O., then he should be sent home from Babson Institute.*

The trustees responded to Babson's recommendations by imposing a campus-wide ban on alcohol, gambling, and firearms. Dormitory regulations were particularly restrictive. Students had to conform to the dress code outside their rooms. To receive guests in the dorm lounge, the student first had to clear it with the front office in the administration building (Mustard Hall), and the office at its discretion could assign a chaperone to accompany the visitor, which it invariably did when the guest

*Before the Dry Dock, an earlier Babson Institute snack bar was located in the Hollister Building.*





*Charles Carlsson and William Mason, Class of 1938, entertained the campus with their musical talents. Carlsson also served as Associate Editor of the Babsonian while Mason played for the B.I. Jesters.*

was a young woman. The playing of phonographs was prohibited after 10:30 p.m., and to thwart clandestine visits and late-night returns, entry doors were locked at 11 p.m. It is only fair to point out that the Institute's parietal rules were consistent with those of most colleges at the time.

News of the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 did nothing to weaken Roger Babson's resolve to keep the campus bone-dry. He fired off a note to the administration with the following instructions: "I am having sent to you with my compliments 50 copies of a booklet on Alcoholism which I would like distributed in the bureau drawers of the dormitories. To keep the boys from throwing them away, you might write on each, 'Property of the Babson Institute.'"

Roger Babson was not one to hide his light or opinions under a bushel. When he pronounced a total ban on alcohol, he meant total ban. On one occasion, the student manager of the college yearbook, the *Babsonian*, secured a full-page ad from the Lower Falls Wine Company. Earl Bowen, who was faculty adviser to the yearbook at the time,

wisely decided to run that one by President Hinckley. To no one's surprise, the ad never appeared.

Moral issues may have aroused the puritanical zeal of the founding father, but his was a puritanism leavened with a sense of humor. "What does your father do?" he asked a student one day. "Well, sir, he exports liquor," came the reply. "Good," Babson fired back. "I hope he exports all of it."

Humor on the subject cut both ways. Roger Babson never lost an opportunity to speak out on the evils of alcohol. Once, he delivered a speech on the Prohibition Party from a platform set up in the middle of the Quadrangle. Babson was facing the Newton Library (now Tomasso) with his back to Park Manor. It was a solemn talk, as befitted a subject so close to the heart of Babson. Yet to his surprise, the audience was in stitches. What he could not see was the pair of students behind him in Park Manor Central who had hung a rope out of an upper-story window with a liquor bottle attached to its end, which they kept hoisting up and down, to the delight of the audience and the confusion of the speaker.

How effective were the school's efforts to stamp out drinking on campus? Not very, according to alumni accounts.

Sir John Horlick '47—an English baronet, no less—remembered showing up at the Babson from somewhat the worse for the drink and having to sit next to President Hinckley. “I must say he took it awfully well,” Sir John remarked, “considering that, as the president of Babson, he wasn't allowed to drink, either.”

Another alumnus recalled the time he was taking a nap in his room in Park Manor, when he heard a knock at the door. It was Roger Babson with a prospective student and his parents in tow. Babson wanted to show them what dorm accommodations were like and he barged in with his guests. It was a moment of terror for the room's occupant. “My problem,” he explained in an interview years later, “was that in the sink there were cans of beer with the water running to cool them.” Discovery would mean instant expulsion. “I thought,” he continued, “this is the end of my career at Babson, but fortunately he [Babson] was so determined to go into the other room he never looked. [He] just walked right through and I lived by the grace of God.”

While alcohol was banished from the campus, tobacco was not, but this did not mean that smoking met with the approval of Roger Babson. He despised the noxious weed, so much so, in fact, that he put the fear of God into employees and students alike who were hooked on the habit. To escape his wrath, the tobacco addicts in the administration building had worked out a Rube Goldberg-like system that allowed them to puff away in peace. As soon as Babson left his office at Babson's Reports, an insider would call ahead to the administration building to tip them off that the boss was on his way over. Controller Bill Coughlin, whose office was in Mustard, gave an eyewitness account of the pandemonium that followed: “They'd [the smokers] have all the old-fashioned air fresheners and everybody would get the ashtrays and somebody would run down to the men's room to flush it all down the toilet and then [they would] spray everything around.



Then Mr. Babson would come in the side door and everything would smell great.”

Imagination is key to fun times on campus, and there was an abundance of that in the early years of the Institute. Babson was not a suitcase college in those days. For one thing, because most of the students came from other parts of the country, they could not go home on weekends; and for another, social life in those days was anything but dull. Take, for example, the evening of November 22, 1926, when the famous “Flim Flam Guild” of Hollywood threw open the doors of its studio (the Peavey Gymnasium) to the students, faculty, staff, and friends of the Babson Institute. There, before the eyes of the audience, was a Hollywood studio, replete with elaborate scenery, floodlights, motion-picture cameras, and, best of all, a covey of beautiful movie queens (played by female employees of the B.S.O.) and handsome actors (drawn, naturally, from the ranks of Babson men), all in costume.

The actors played to a capacity crowd, the show having sold out days earlier. Kicking off the evening's entertainment was a presentation of a playlet from the theater of the camp, “The Cold, Cold, Cruel World,” subtitled “Pitched into the Sea of Life.” It was a hit, as was the follow-up—a screen

test featuring impersonations of such luminaries of the silver screen as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Bebe Daniels, Harold Lloyd, and Charlie Chaplin. The surprise winner was Adolphe Menjou (played by debonair Frank Decoudray), who was signed on the spot to a \$50,000 “movie contract” with the “Flim Flam Studio.”

Highlight of the evening was the filming of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” The audience roared its approval of Topsy and Uncle Tom and hissed Simon Legree, but the star of the performance, indeed of the entire evening, was Little Eva played by “the fattest student in the Institute.” Little Eva’s painfully slow ascent heavenward by means of a block and tackle brought down the house and the curtain.

In the prewar years, Babson Institute, with a student body that never numbered more than a few score and with a staff consisting of a handful of faculty and administrators, truly fit the mold of a small college. With its tiny size came certain advantages, not the least of which was the esprit and group

*White tablecloths in the dining hall in Park Manor indicated that meals were a formal affair. Students dined in coats and ties.*



bonding generated among the small bands of young men who journeyed through the school year together. For many the annual experience cemented lifelong friendships; for all, it spelled good times and fond memories.

Not only did every student have close personal contact with every other student, but also with every member of the faculty, thanks to a curriculum that obliged them to take every course taught at the Institute. Add to this mix the many social events during the school year in which faculty and students came together on a social basis, and it helps explain the extraordinarily close relationship that existed between the students and their instructors. When the students and their dates glided across the dance floor of Knight Auditorium to “the modern syncopation” of Ray Lamson and His Harvardians, the professors and their spouses glided with them. (There was no rock ‘n’ roll in those days to part the generations on the dance floor.)

Even at formal events, informality reigned. Such was the case with the biennial student-faculty banquets, which brought the students and faculty together in the dining room of Park Manor to celebrate two special calendar events—the kickoff of the school year in September and the wrap-up in June. What could have been evenings of uncomfortable solemnity instead featured roasts in which good-natured gibes flew back and forth; a spirit of camaraderie, by all reported accounts, “permeated the atmosphere.”

Consistent with the philosophy of Roger Babson, the Institute proclaimed extracurricular activities “just as significant for the growth of the student as any other phase of his college experience.” And the school practiced what it preached, encouraging student participation in a wide variety of social, recreational, and athletic activities. Another Roger Babson touch was putting the students themselves in charge of the extracurricular program. No sooner had the Institute moved to its new campus in 1923 than student committees were at work planning dances, parties, musicals, and a host of other on-campus activities that added sparkle to life at Babson.

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A perennial favorite was the Babson Smoker, an evening of entertainment staged on the eve of final exam week. A master of ceremonies, chosen by the students from their own ranks, presided over the evening's entertainment. Typical of this event was the 1937 program, which included a wrestling match, a demonstration on how to use a yo-yo, and the pièce de résistance of the evening—four reels of Mickey Mouse cartoons.

Each year in early June, a band of two dozen or so Babson fishermen arose from their slumber “not long after the birds began to chirp” for the annual fishing trip. Departure time was 6 a.m. The ride to Scituate Harbor was made in silence, the anglers struck dumb no doubt by the unfamiliar sight of the sunrise. Once on board the fishing boat and on their way out of the harbor for a full day of deep-sea fishing, the group's spirits revived and the chatter on the ride back home about who snagged the biggest one that got away provided a stark contrast to the silent reverence with which they had greeted the dawn.

Friday night informals at Babson meant record hops, complete with phonograph and an electric

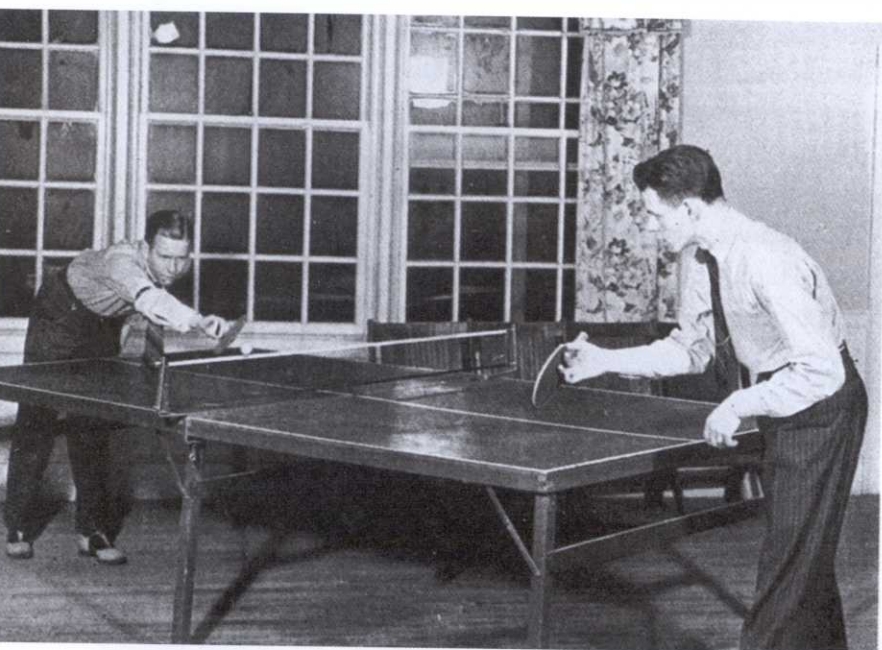
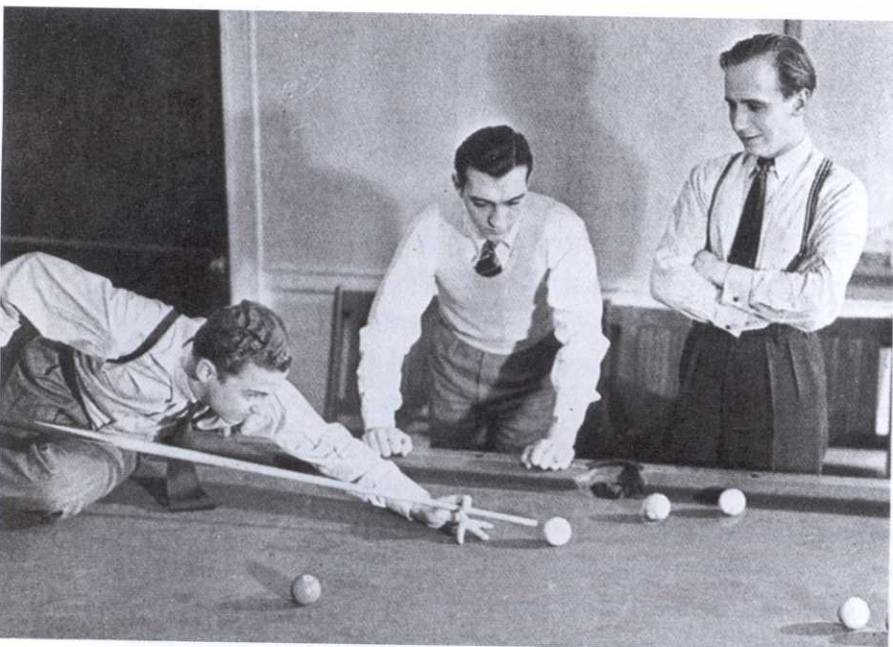
amplifier loud enough to bring the music of the best bands in the land to the swinging and swaying couples on the dance floor at Park Manor. Poor disadvantaged youths, they were born too soon. Musical technology has marched on, bringing in its wake the capacity to share with everyone within a five-mile radius through the modern miracle of high-tech stereo equipment, synthesizers, tweeters, woofers, and boom-boxes the glory of rap and the grandeur of heavy metal at a pitch calculated to strike the dumb deaf.

From 1919 to 1943, tiny enrollments, inadequate facilities and equipment, and lack of support from the administration precluded the emergence of a bona fide athletic program at the Institute. Nevertheless, the students did manage to get something going on their own. In 1921, they fielded the school's first team, a baseball squad that was edged three games to two in a series played against a Babson's Statistical Organization nine. The students kept at it and finally exacted their revenge in 1924 by defeating their B.S.O. rivals and capturing the trophy.

The opening of the Peavey Gymnasium in 1924 heralded the arrival of basketball on campus. In fact, the top sports event that year, at least as far as the fans were concerned, was the contest between the administration and faculty all-star basketball teams, which the administration finally pulled out 62-3.

By 1926, enrollments were large enough to form athletics teams from each of the curriculum divisions. A Production touch-football team bested a Finance team 52-18 in the first intramural game played by curriculum division teams. But the sport of choice for these teams was basketball, and out of the intramural competition came the decision to form the Institute's first varsity team—a basketball squad composed of the best players from the curriculum divisions.

It is a pleasure to report that Babson won its first varsity game ever by trouncing the Dri-Bow Club of Wellesley 32-4. A subsequent loss to Wellesley High School, however, raised some troubling questions concerning the caliber of play of the Babson team that called itself the “Ferocious Financiers.”



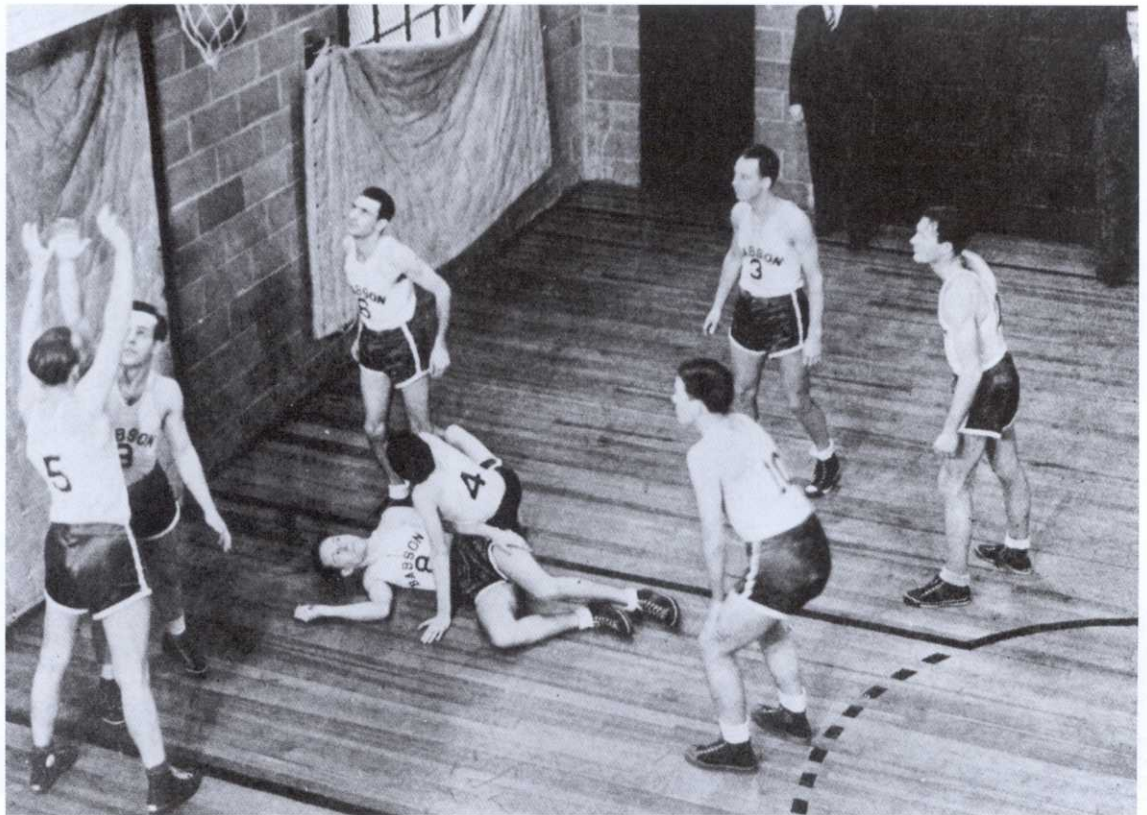
*From the beginning, the administration stressed the importance of recreation. Facilities for pool and table tennis were provided in Park Manor, as shown in these 1938 photographs.*

Babson's tennis players initially had to practice on a clay court on nearby Maugus Avenue. Practice must have made perfect. During the 1921-1922 school year, they won their matches against the female tennis players from Dana Hall and Wellesley College. This particular contest between the sexes was a first and a last. In 1923, President Coleman presented the school with a permanent tennis trophy in the form of a shield. This marked the beginning of Babson's annual males-only tennis tournament, in which students and faculty competed for the Coleman Shield.

President Carl Smith once wrote that the Institute "has been particularly successful in understanding the needs, the abilities, the capabilities, and the future vocational outlook of its students. . . ." Babson students, he asserted, "are here for business and study." They were not interested in "the side shows" that take up the time of "the rah rah boys" at other colleges. Fortunately, Dr. Smith was dead wrong. Babson never was, nor was it intended to be, a place of all work and no play. The president's protestations to the contrary, there was plenty of "rah rah" spirit on tap at Babson, even as the Great Depression tightened its stranglehold on the nation's economy. Dr. Smith as much as admitted the fact, when he himself succumbed to the roar of the crowd.

Nothing pleased students more than to even the score with faculty and administrators by besting them in sports. Thus, they were delighted when Babson's senior citizens fielded a volleyball team anchored by none other than the venerable Dr. Carl Smith, whose lightning-like moves on the floor dazzled teammates and opponents alike. The old-timers went on to place second in the annual volleyball tournament, much to the astonishment of their youthful opponents. "Where they [the geriatric squad] get their stamina and skill is a mystery," ran one student lament. "They not only 'run the legs off' their disciples in class, but they insist on doing it in the gym."

On a Saturday morning in the winter of 1926, a group of Babson students and faculty descended upon the Nashua Country Club in Nashua, New



*Before World War II, the Institute provided no comprehensive athletic program. But students organized their own teams, and after the opening of Peavey Gymnasium in 1924, basketball became a popular sport.*

Hampshire, to try their luck on skates, skis, sleds, and “the exciting toboggan hill.” Despite the spills, sprained ligaments, and assorted aches and pains, this marked the start of the annual Winter Sports Festival. Each winter, the Babsonians returned lemming-like to Nashua to test their threshold of pain. Strange to say, out of this mayhem evolved today’s annual Winter Weekend.

In 1926, the students also organized a bowling league, which quickly blossomed into a favorite intramural sport. The league consisted of several teams, and it took a score of seventy-five or higher in qualifying trials to make the team. Interest in the league ran so high that practically every student in the school bowled in the trials. Once the slots were filled, the tournament began.

Each Wednesday evening during the ten-week season, the teams, bearing names that ranged from the fiercely independent “Unholy Rollers,” to the conformist “Non-Drinkers,” to the intriguing “Vineyard Queens,” trooped to the bowling alleys in Needham Center where they faced off in tournament competition. Student fans packed the gallery to cheer on their favorites.

The cost for the evening’s entertainment is a reminder that times have changed. Each bowler kicked sixty cents into a kitty, forty-five cents of which paid for three strings of bowling. The remaining fifteen cents went into “his banquet account which at the end of the season will leave plenty of money in the treasury to pay for a dinner and then some.” The dinner referred to was the annual bowling banquet held at the Wellesley Inn, and the buck and a half total in each student’s account at the end of the season covered all the expenses for the banquet “and then some.”

The appearance of a faculty team in the bowling league lineup in 1932 brought some chuckles from the students and, in deference to the ragged performance of “the old men” in the qualifying trials, the students offered them a handsome handicap.

The students soon had cause to rue their generosity. An eyewitness account suggested that they had been hustled. “Most of the old men just rolled enough to qualify and, of course, everybody thought this team would be easy for the young fellows.” It turned out that “the young fellows” were in for a surprise. The account continued: “But, . . . the





*Students had to find their own accommodations before the first residence hall opened on campus in 1925. Some students lived at the Wellesley Inn.*

photographers and motion-picture cameramen flocking daily to the hinterlands of the Babson campus to film the show. Babson's crowd-pleasing partridge did not disappoint them. Photos and accounts of the bird hit the newsstands. Newsreels of its soaring solo flickered in movie houses all over the country. It proved a public-relations windfall for the college, and a delight for all who had the privilege to watch the feathery virtuoso swoop to command.

Lodgings presented a problem for students until the construction of the first residence hall in 1925. All but the few commuters who lived at home had to make their own housing arrangements. A lucky few managed to book rooms at the Abbott House the first year, so all they had to do was tumble out of bed and pop into class next door. The rest lived farther afield.

One popular residence was the Rock Hill Lodge, a former boys' prep school, situated, according to the Babson catalogue, just 15 minutes by foot from the Institute's 1920-1923 Washington Street location in downtown Wellesley Hills. Another favorite was the Wellesley Inn. Its distance from the school—a

20-minute hike—was offset by its excellent accommodations and superb bill of fare, no small consideration for a student clientele accustomed to the best of both.

Whatever the arrangements, students had to punch in at school at 8:30 a.m. sharp, a ritual that compelled them to allow sufficient time if coming by shanks' mare, or to grab a trolley or taxi (the standard cab fare was two bits, which most of these lads could handle) if in a rush or if the weather was inclement.

One student stood out in the crowd of twenty-seven who showed up at the Abbott Road school-house opening day 1919. Dan Gerber drove up in a spiffy new Cadillac and immediately became the most popular member of the Class of 1920. Being the only owner of an automobile carried heavy responsibilities. It was Dan Gerber who had to decide where to go and with whom on a given evening and on weekends. Others might offer suggestions, but the final nod came from Gerber. Perhaps it was this early exercise in leadership and decision-making that first stirred the inner talents of the Institute's most famous pre-World War II



*Above: In the early days of aviation, Babson Institute had an emergency landing strip on the upper field. Occasionally a student or alumnus would land his plane there, as occurred in this photograph circa 1929.*

alumnus. (After graduation, Gerber gained fame and fortune by developing a method for canning pureed baby food and parlaying that breakthrough into a giant new industry. Through the years, he proved to be a generous benefactor to the school he loved, and Babson's Gerber Hall remains an enduring reminder of that spirit.)

Living off campus had certain benefits as well as disadvantages. For all of the Institute's talk that it expected students to comport themselves at all times as "self-respecting gentlemen," once the young members were off campus, they were no longer subject to the close scrutiny and paternalistic controls that they experienced while in school.

Freedom is a heady tonic, especially for the non-conformist. One who fit that mold was McCormick Moore '28, who transferred into Babson in 1927 from a Pennsylvania college after "I was fired for getting in too late one night." Evidently Moore had a penchant for late hours. He and his roommate once raced their touring cars—each drove a Stutz, naturally—at 108 miles per hour down Commonwealth Avenue at four o'clock in the morning.

*Below: Dan Gerber '20 arrived in the fall of 1919 driving a Cadillac. Most students did not have automobiles, so for them Gerber's car became a popular means of transportation.*



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**The Babson administration may have frowned on unauthorized use of the emergency landing strip, but, for the students, it was the best show in town.**

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Fortunately, "Mac" lived to tell about it, and the *Babson Bulletin* in 1985 recounted what happened in the aftermath: "A couple of weeks later, driving more sedately in Back Bay, Mac was stopped by a policeman who recognized his car, confessed his inability to catch him, and let him off with a warning."

Those certainly were different times. For example, radio station WBSO's twin antenna towers were lighted at night, as beacons for passenger planes making the New York-to-Boston run. In addition, the federal government had a separate beacon tower constructed on campus to guide planes experiencing trouble aloft to the small emergency landing strip that Roger Babson had built on the upper field across from Coleman Hall.

Several planes did, in fact, come in for forced landings, to the consternation of their passengers and the delight of the students. However, the distinction of being the first pilot to intentionally set down on the upper field goes to John M. Kennedy '28. On the spur of the moment, he flew in from Boston in his Great Lakes Biplane to catch up with some of his buddies for a brief reunion.

The Babson administration may have frowned on unauthorized use of the emergency landing strip, but, for the students, it was the best show in town. On a crisp fall Saturday morning in 1929, only a handful of students put in an appearance at Knight Auditorium for the obligatory assembly. Because attendance was required, there had to be a reason, and a good one, why the absentees were willing to court the wrath of officialdom. They were up on the playing field, gazing skyward for the sight of the single-motor Travelair Monoplane scheduled to touch down at any moment. Its mission: to pick up five Babson students who had chartered the plane to fly them down to New Haven for the Yale-Princeton football game. At the appointed time, the orange-and-black six-passenger aircraft swooped in for a graceful landing and was at once surrounded by an excited mob of students. To their delight, the pilot rolled the plane down to the lower end of the field, revved the motor, and took off. Once aloft, he circled the campus in one great arc before coming in for another smooth landing.

The five passengers, suitcases in hand and dashingly attired in raccoon coats, clambered on board. Again, the plane taxied to the lower end of the field, and with the throttle wide open, roared skyward. With one final swoop around the campus, off it headed in the general direction of New Haven.

Babson's most famous aviator was John L. Vette, who arrived at the Institute in September 1933, having flown from his home in Oak Hills, Illinois, to Boston in his blue-and-orange biplane. Vette was a favorite with his classmates, who dubbed him "our boy aviator," and elected him class president. He also captained the varsity basketball team. To prove himself worthy of these honors, the "boy aviator" dazzled his classmates with a daring aerial stunt. Flying in from Boston, he pulled a neat "forced landing" on the hill just behind Park Manor South. "Mighty bumpy," he grinned, as he alighted from his plane to the cheers of his fans.

One final item on college life in the early days deserves comment—the Boston connection. School catalogues incessantly reminded readers of the advantages available to them because of the

