



DAYS OF POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE

A LOOK BACK AT COMMENCEMENT
AND CLASS DAY EXERCISES OF YESTERYEAR

In 1929 seniors sat on the Green in front of the Class Day speaker's platform before parading to the Bema to smoke their clay pipes and smash them on the stump of the Old Pine.

ALTHOUGH DARTMOUTH'S COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES DATE BACK TO AUGUST 28, 1771, CAMERAS DIDN'T CAPTURE THE SCENE — OR CLASS DAY, FIRST HELD IN 1854 — UNTIL THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. SINCE THEN, HUNDREDS OF ARCHIVAL IMAGES HAVE ACCUMULATED IN RAUNER LIBRARY'S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS. THESE RARELY SEEN ARCHIVAL PHOTOS ARE PRIMARILY FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY, BEFORE BROWNIES, POLAROIDS AND CELLPHONES BECAME AS UBIQUITOUS AS CAPS AND GOWNS.



In 1907 the band set the pace for a Class Day march to the Old Pine. After the ceremony all students headed to the Senior Fence, where seniors formed a gauntlet and thrashed the juniors with belts. In 1894 (far right, top) the weeklong Commencement proceedings featured a handful of orating students rather than a main speaker. In 1918 (far right, bottom) only 81 seniors were on hand to receive their diplomas—168 classmates could not attend due to military commitments.



