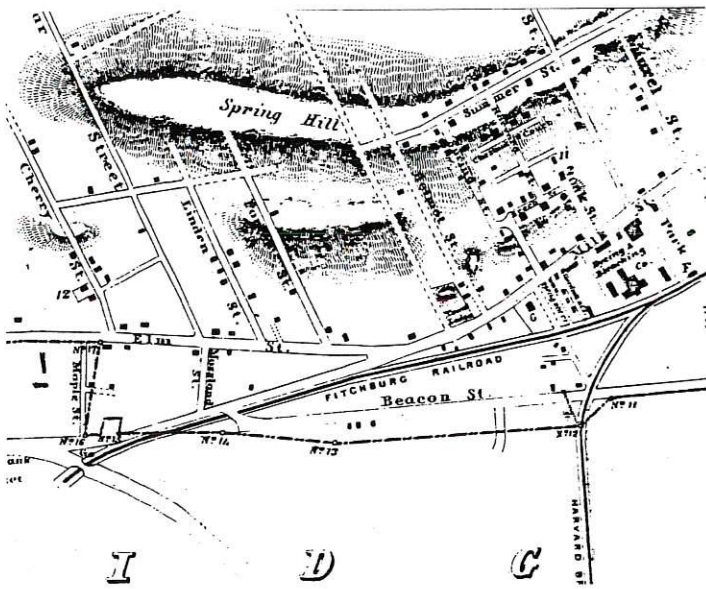


Spring Hill



Map of Spring Hill from 1852 Draper Map of Somerville. Brastow's Spring Hill subdivision near Harvard Street, and Cherry, Linden, Porter, Belmont and Laurel Streets are the only streets platted between the rangeways corresponding to School, Central, Lowell and Cedar Streets.

Spring Hill Subdivision Plan, 1843. Alexander Wadsworth, surveyor.



At one hundred and thirty-seven feet above sea level, Spring Hill reportedly derives its name from a spring which was located along the glacial drumlin or hill which runs between Lowell and Cedar Streets in the vicinity of Summer Street. As part of the seventeenth century Stinted Common, the area provided excellent farmsites for Charlestown residents in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Spring Hill is bisected by seventeenth century rangeways corresponding to present day Central, Lowell and Cedar Streets and Willow Avenue. Large agricultural tracts were divided for Charlestown residents, with eighteenth century houses and farm buildings situated in at least four locations along Milk Row. Somerville Avenue, originally known as "Milk Row," running east and west at the foot of the hill, provided a route connecting to Medford, Charlestown, and Cambridge. In addition to well-drained soil for agriculture, the southern slope of Spring Hill provided slate deposits which were quarried at two locations. Out-croppings at Dane's Ledge, near Granite Street and the Town Ledge, at the intersection of Lowell Street and Somerville Avenue, are still evident today.

Among the early farms at the edge of Spring Hill was Timothy Tufts', whose eighteenth century farmhouse at Willow and Elm Street was opposite the site of a Revolutionary War skirmish which occurred after the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775. Portions of the Tufts lands were later developed into an extensive brickyard, extending from Elm Street across Broadway between Cedar Street and Willow Avenue. Prior to the residential development of the area in the 1890s, the farmhouse was still occupied by a descendant of the original family. The first house actually built on the southern slope of the hill was that of John Tapley, who constructed a small frame house near present-day Belmont Street in 1829.

Farming, particularly the raising of dairy cattle and hay, was carried on until the Civil War. Market gardening, including the raising of fruit, could be found on Spring Hill until about 1890. The development of industries along Milk Row (Somerville Avenue), the construction of the Fitchburg Railroad to Fresh Pond in 1836, and the speculative promotion of residential building land in Somerville after it became a separate town in 1842 all had a great impact on the agricultural landscape of Spring Hill. With passenger rail service available via a station at Kent Street (and later Park Street), in the 1840s the southern slope became a desirable site for the construction of Boston and Charlestown businessmen's homes.

One of the first Somerville residents to see the residential potential of this area was George O. Brastow. Brastow, a State Senator and eventually the first Mayor of Somerville (1872-73) was listed in the 1851 Somerville Directory as a "dealer in real estate," the only person then listed with such a title. Born in Wrentham, Massachusetts, he came to Somerville in 1838,

while it was still a portion of Charlestown. He settled on a large tract of Spring Hill, and built a spacious, porticoed Greek Revival house near the intersection of Summer and Central Streets. In 1843, he hired surveyor Alexander Wadsworth of Boston to plat a section of the hill, including present-day Harvard Street and several short courts, now corresponding to Monmouth Street, Harvard Place, Elm Place, Atherton and Beech Streets. The rectilinear plan drawn by Wadsworth provided seventy-two excellent building sites, averaging 50 x 100 feet, with views of Harvard College and Cambridge to the south, and as the rapidly developing industrial and commercial corridor along Somerville's Cambridge border. By 1850, there was a collection of fine double Greek Revival houses in the Spring Hill subdivision. Each of the original eight houses had a seven-columned Doric portico, with a central cupola atop the ridgepole.

Directories reveal that the first residents of the Brastow subdivision were businessmen such as John Hall, a door and sash dealer, and H.R. Rogers, a liquor dealer. The subdivision attracted the builders of other architecturally interesting houses, including inventor Enoch Robinson. Robinson's 1856 Round House at the corner of Atherton and Beech Streets became an instant object of curiosity in Somerville and throughout the Boston area.

Brastow was also responsible for the platting of residential lots on Central, Oxford, and Church Streets and Trull Lane in 1846, and Laurel Street (laid out by Chelsea surveyor John Low) in 1848.

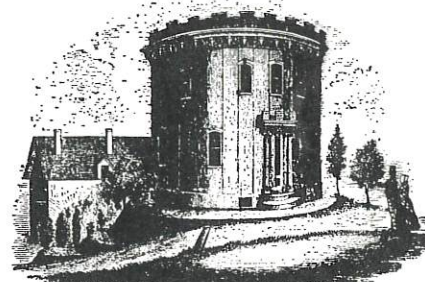
Until the 1870s, access to Spring Hill was primarily via Milk Row and the few north-south streets. Between 1842 and 1870, Summer Street extended only between Central and Lowell Streets, with another segment partially built between Porter and Cherry Streets. In 1870, Summer Street was fully constructed between Union and Davis Square, and residential development of the area was accelerated as horsecar, and eventually, electric streetcar service was extended to the western edge of Spring Hill.

After the first wave of pre-Civil War development, several types of residential development occurred on Spring Hill. After 1870, large single family homes were still built on ample lots, particularly along Cherry, Craigie, Belmont, Spring and Laurel Streets. However, small single family workers' houses were constructed by speculative builders along streets such as Hall, Cedar, Porter and Granite, or on the many short courts or terraces which are found in this area. Attached rows and larger tenements were also tucked into the courts. This increased density, which began after the Civil War, anticipated the building types of Spring Hill's last phase of residential development, the three-deckers, which were the standard choice of infill builders between ca. 1885 and 1910.

Several streets were the work of one builder. H.W.P. Colson, a realtor and insurance dealer with offices in Union Square and Boston, built twenty homes on Cypress and Atherton Streets between 1897 and 1900. Colson's builders used three basic gable-roofed house plans, varying each building with the arrangement of porches, bays, windows, and trim.

One of the last sections of Spring Hill to develop was the Tufts brickyard and farm property. The streets of Banks, Burnside and Hancock were carved out of the Tufts homestead in the 1890s, and the construction of two and three family houses soon followed. The subdivision crowded out the Tufts House and a stone Gothic cottage (ca. 1845) which originally fronted on Elm Street. Although Spring Hill was pleasantly situated for early residents who enjoyed the fine views and good air, its location and elevation were found to be disadvantageous by later residents. Shortly after the Civil War, the slaughterhouses

LADIES' FAIR AND SOCIAL LEVEE,



AT THE CIRCULAR HOUSE,

SPRING HILL, SOMERVILLE.

This NOVEL ENTERTAINMENT being now nearly completed, Mr. ENOCH ROBINSON has kindly offered the use of it to the SPRING HILL LADIES' BOURGEOIS SOCIETY, for the purpose of holding a Fair and Social Levee, for the benefit of the Baptist Church on Spring Hill, Somerville. The Fair will commence on

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, Oct. 8, and continue through THURSDAY and FRIDAY, Day and Evening. ON FRIDAY EVENING THERE WILL BE A SOCIAL LEVEE.

A Variety of Useful and Fancy Articles and Refreshments will be offered for Sale during the Fair.

The citizens of Boston and vicinity are respectfully invited to improve this opportunity to examine the interior of this truly unique and curious edifice. Its circular form, the peculiar construction of its sliding blinds and windows, its oval parlor, its round library, its novel kitchen, with slate floor and walls of varnished whitewood, its chambers opening into a pleasant round beneath the central sky-light, and its curious and convenient arrangement of all the rooms throughout the house, when taken in connection with the fact that it has been erected, with superior workmanship, at a much less expense than a square house of the same dimensions, conspire, with many other facts connected with its construction, to render the house itself an object of efficient interest to reward the visitor.

CARS will run between the Fitchburg Depot, Boston, and the Somerville Station, (within three minutes' walk of the Circular House,) leaving the Fitchburg Depot at 6.20, 7.30, 7.40, 7.50, 8, 8.30, 9.30, 9.55, 10.15, 11.35, A. M., and 1.45, 1.45, 3.30, 4.35, 4.55, 5.15, 6.18, 7.05, P. M. RETURNING, leave the Somerville Station at 8, 8.20, 8.30, 9.45, 10, 12, A. M., and 12.45, 2, 2.10, 2.30, 2.45, 3.30, 5.45, 6, 6.45, 8.30, 10.45. On Tuesday and Thursday the 8.30 P. M. train will leave at 11 P. M. OMNIBUSES will run between No. 45 Brattle Street, Boston, and the Harvard Railroad Crossing, in Somerville, (within four minutes' walk of the Circular House,) every hour of the Day and Evening, from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M. They will also run from Somerville to Boston at such extra hours in the Evening as may accommodate visitors to the Fair and Levee.

Tickets to the Fair, 12 1-2 Cents. To the Levee, 25 Cents.

SHOULD THE WEATHER PROVE UNFAVORABLE, THE FAIR WILL BE POSTPONED ONE WEEK.

White & Potter's Steam Press—1000 Impressions per hour—Spring Lane, Boston.

THE SOMERVILLE ROUND HOUSE

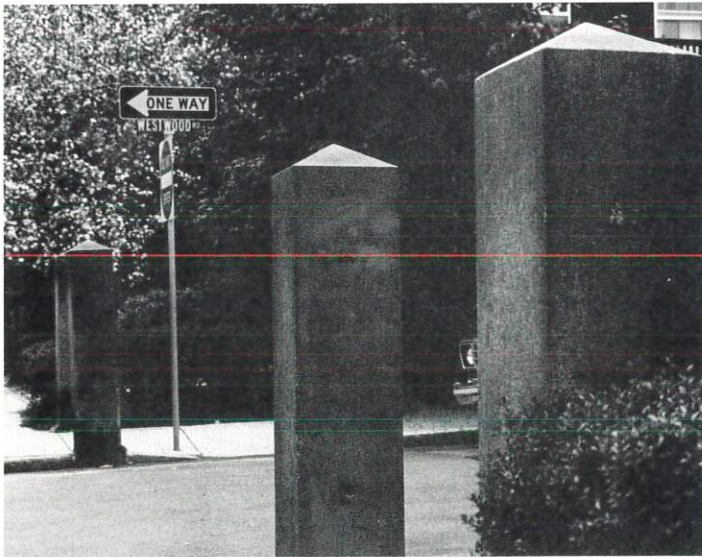
The Round House, 36 Atherton Street, 1856. Photograph 1900. Among Somerville's architectural curiosities is the 40-foot diameter Round House built by inventor and locksmith Enoch Robinson (1801-1888). The central hall, surrounded by circular and oval rooms, is topped by a glass dome. The house is clad in planks cut on a forty foot diameter and laid flat, one upon the other. Such construction was advocated by Orson Fowler, the promoter of the octagonal house craze which was popular between 1850 and 1860. Although the circle was seen as the perfect house shape by Fowler, it was too difficult to build, and Fowler's publications were usually illustrated with octagonal house plans. The elliptical parlor of the Robinson Round House also suggests a source in French Neo-classical architecture.



Somerville Historical Society



George O. Proctor House, 44 Spring Street, ca. 1880. Photograph ca. 1900. Proctor was born in Rockingham Vermont. In 1874, he went into partnership with his brother in the grain business, eventually becoming one of the largest hay and grain dealers in the Boston area. In 1880, Proctor purchased this Spring Hill estate, and lived here while Mayor of Somerville.



and factories along the Miller's River and the Fitchburg Railroad corridor began to pollute the air and obstruct the once-pleasant views of the surrounding area. Late nineteenth century newspaper articles in the **Somerville Journal** are peppered with residents' complaints. Despite such nuisance, the streets east of Cherry endured throughout the nineteenth century as a small community of handsome estates whose businessmen-owners relied on the rail and horsecar routes to carry them to work in Boston or Charlestown.

Although industry intruded on the character of the southern edge of Spring Hill, Westwood Road was developed as one of the city's few exclusive residential enclaves. Platted on the Shute estate and Benton farms in 1874 but not developed until 1894, Westwood Road remains one of Somerville's finest collections of Shingle Style residences. Real estate developer Charles Bradshaw built the first eight houses in the subdivision, and moved the original estate house to a side lot. For landscaping, Bradshaw relocated mature elms and maples from elsewhere on the estate to the street line. Reportedly, the tree-moving was a procedure never before tried in Massachusetts. Among the first residents of the road were Edwin D. Sibley, a Boston lawyer, Thomas M. Lewis, a Boston apothecary, and Herbert S. Kingman, a butter dealer.

The Martin S. Carr School was constructed on Atherton Street in 1898 near the site of the first school on Spring Hill, the 1850 Spring Hill Primary. The Carr School's Renaissance Revival design was produced by Boston architect Aaron Gould and executed in red brick with granite sills.

At the turn of the century, several old Spring Hill estates (and their well-landscaped grounds) were razed for the construction of large brick apartment buildings, and several institutional buildings were constructed in their place, such as the 1891 Somerville Hospital. Churches and fraternal organizations moved into some of the largest houses, such as the Second Empire Style house of Columbus Tyler on Central Street which was occupied by the Somerville Congregational Society and later the Somerville Lodge of Elks.

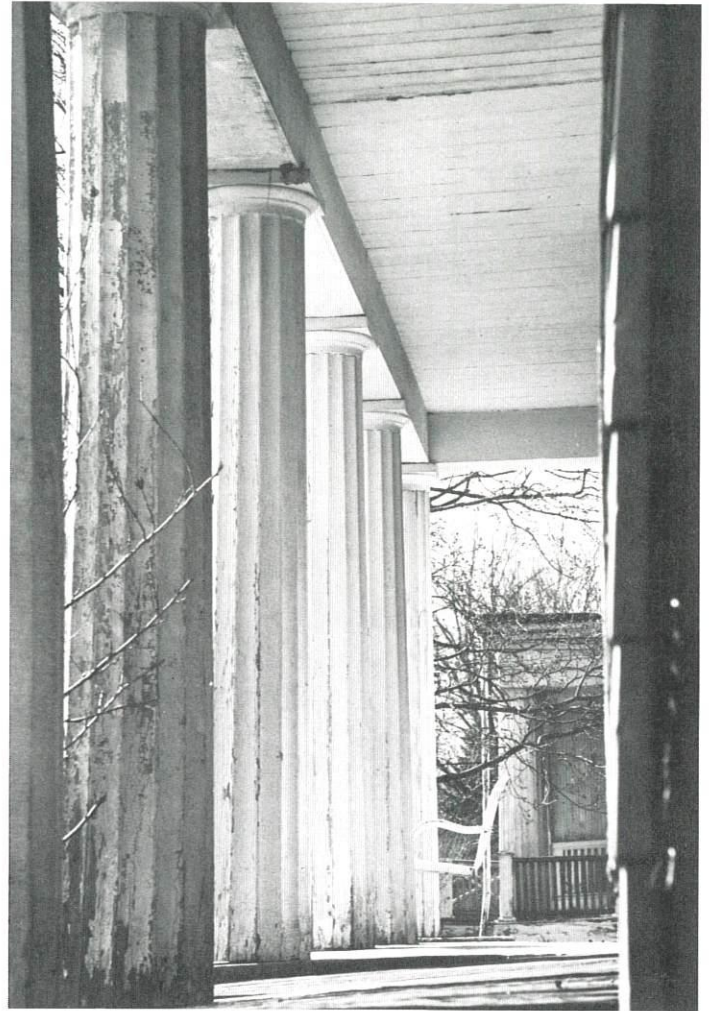
In the 1920s, Alderman John Locatelli constructed several four-story apartment buildings on Summer Street, including the "Somerville Chambers" at 156 Summer Street, which replaced the 1838 Greek Revival house of George Brastow, the developer of Spring Hill's first subdivision. Fifty-nine suites of two, three, or four rooms were provided in the brick and cast stone structure embellished with a Florentine entrance.

Westwood Road. The entrance gates of Westwood Road between Benton Road and Central Street are the original granite gates of the Shute estate.

George Ireland House, 20 Preston Road, 1853. Photograph ca. 1890. George Ireland, a member of an old Somerville family, resided near the corner of School Street, (known also as Ireland's Rangeway and Milk Row or Somerville Avenue). After a brief career in the soda and potash business in New Hampshire and Boston, Ireland moved to Somerville in 1853, where he began the cultivation of fruit and sold real estate. Among his real estate developments was Preston Road, which was carved out of the apple orchards of the original Ireland estate, and named for his wife, Jane Preston. The Ireland House was moved to its present location from its original site near Somerville Avenue.



Spring Hill: An Architectural View



Double Greek Revival House, 43-45 Atherton Street. ca. 1845. The central cupola and seven Doric columns of one of the first Spring Hill subdivision houses are original details. Five similar houses still stand in the subdivision.



Harvard Place Greek Revival Houses, ca. 1845.





46 Belmont Street, 1829. The first house built on the south slope of Spring Hill was constructed by John Tapley, a farmer. George Allen, the next owner, was a piano finisher who purchased the property in 1853.



George Vincent House, 32 Cherry Street. ca. 1855. Somerville City Clerk George Vincent was one of the first homebuilders on Cherry Street, at the edge of the Tufts farm and brickyard property. Originally, the Vincent House had a flat roof and Italianate brackets.



Charles Bradshaw House, 175 Summer, 1884. George F. Loring, architect. Trees and vines obscure the silhouette of this interesting brick house which has a tall French turret at the rear, and a slate-covered mansard roof. Bradshaw, a Chelsea hardware dealer and the developer of Westwood Road, was a member of the Benton family, long-time farmers and dairymen in the Spring Hill area.



49 Spring Street, ca. 1893. George F. Loring, architect. One of five Queen Anne houses built on a subdivided estate by Christopher Rymes, a partner in the machine manufacturing firm of Cook, Rymes, and Company. Original details of this example are intact, including an elaborate porch with bulbous, turned posts.

49-53 Laurel Street, ca. 1880. This Queen Anne rowhouse was built on the estate of Alexander Foster, a lumber dealer.



Eugene P. Carr House, 18 Benton Road. ca. 1910. Built for a partner in the M. W. Carr Company, Somerville manufacturers of jewelry and novelties, this Shingle Style house is in near-original condition, with a prominent fieldstone chimney mass and foundation and shingled wall surfaces.



Church of St. Catherine of Genoa. 179 Summer Street, 1907-16. Designed by Charles Donagh Maginnis, one of the leading Catholic architects in America, and an Irish immigrant. Described as "one of the most beautiful churches in America", it is the finest example of Maginnis' work.



Beech Tree, Columbus Tyler Estate. Columbus Tyler was a farmer and steward of the McLean Asylum. This tree was originally part of the extensive grounds around Tyler's Second Empire Style house.

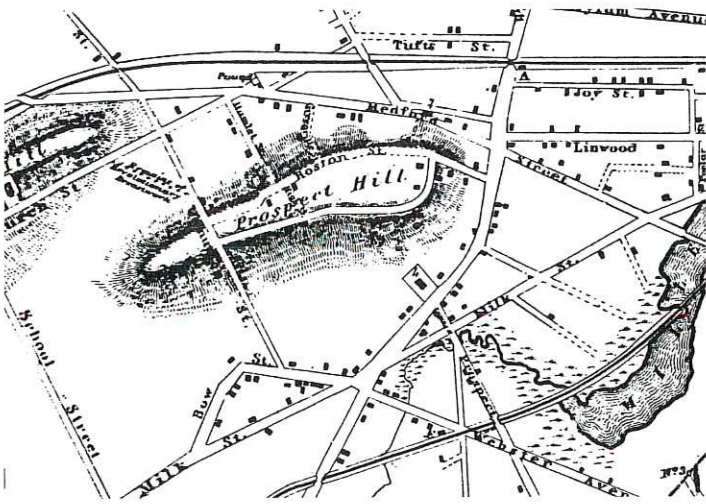
Green Street. Queen Anne Style homes built ca. 1895-1900 were among the last single family houses on Spring Hill.



Somerville Historical Society, Westwood Road and Central Street, 1933. William Dykeman, architect.



Prospect Hill



Map of the City of Somerville, 1852. Martin Draper.

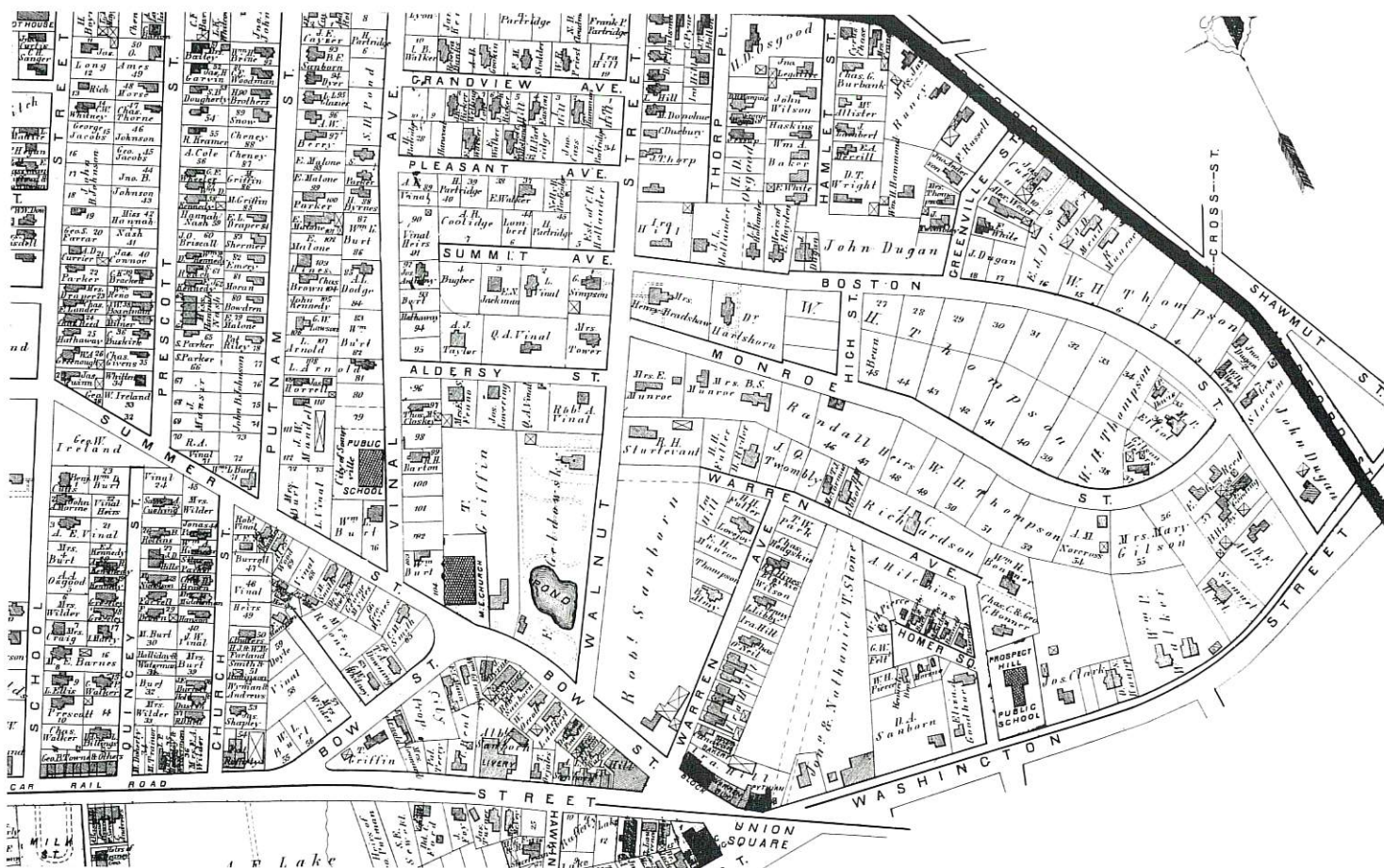
Prospect Hill will ultimately be the most artistocratic and fashionable place in the suburbs of Boston. . . .

Somerville Journal, 1870

The Prospect Hill area is bounded by School Street at the west, Somerville Avenue and Washington Street at the south, and McGrath Highway and Medford Street at the north and east. Prospect Hill, a glacial drumlin, is situated at the northeast and is the area's most prominent topographical feature. Central Hill, at the northwest corner, is another prominent drumlin which drops off sharply to Medford Street, creating a steep ridge.

In the eighteenth century, a large section of Prospect Hill was Tufts family property. Nathaniel Tufts owned the 55-acre "Great Pasture" bounded by present-day Walnut, School, and Bow Streets, and Highland and Somerville Avenues. The c. 1750 residence of his son Nathaniel was located near the site of the First Methodist Episcopal Church on Bow Street. Walnut and School Streets were originally laid out as rangeways as part of the seventeenth century "Stinted Common" of Charlestown. Somerville Avenue and Bow Street originated as Charlestown Lane, and were well-travelled during the Revolutionary War. The British marched down Charlestown Lane on their way to Lexington and Concord, and Union Square was the site of several small skirmishes. Central and Prospect Hills were fortified during the siege of Boston, and the first flag of the colonies was flown on January 1, 1776, from the citadel at Prospect Hill.

After the Revolution, Prospect Hill continued as an agricultural area, with a small trade center at the intersection of Washington Street and Somerville Avenue, at that time called the Cambridge Road and Milk Row, respectively. The Boston and Lowell railroad skirted the eastern and northern slope in 1835, with a passenger station on Somerville Avenue and one later near Medford Street. To the south, the Fitchburg Division of the Boston and Maine also offered steam train service to Charlestown and Boston. This service was supplemented by horsecar omnibuses or "hourlies" from Union Square to Boston. Prospect Hill, like nearby Spring Hill, soon became a desirable site for the construction of businessmen's homes. The first home builders were men such as Robert Aldersey Vinal, son of a Somerville settler, and Robert Munroe, both Boston grain dealers. In the 1840s they built modest Greek Revival houses on the southern slope of the hill off Walnut Street. Other well-to-do merchants and real estate speculators purchased large tracts of farmland on the southern slopes of Prospect and Spring Hills. They subdivided these tracts in anticipation of sales to other businessmen who commuted to Charlestown or Boston. In 1852, ten years after Somerville became a separate town, however, Prospect Hill was generally



unoccupied. Only one new major street had been added since the construction of Medford Street in 1813. This was the circle around Prospect Hill laid out in 1842 consisting of Boston and Munroe Streets. The most substantial growth came after the Civil War:

Mssrs. Hill, Walker, and Abbot and E.M. Bacon have recently purchased a large tract of land near Union Square, formerly the old Vinal Estate, which the owners have laid out into handsome house lots of convenient moderate size . . . these are now being brought into the market and will prove very desirable for building sites.

The location of this property is close to Boston and the facilities so great for reaching it, direct from the city, frequently throughout the day and evening that there can be no doubt that these house lots will come into quick request. Through the center of this land a fine wide avenue has been laid out running from Union Square to Prospect Hill to be called Warren Avenue. The locality selected by these gentlemen enable them to offer some of the most eligible and sightly lots in the town for sale . . . for the businessman in Boston no pleasanter or handier residence can be found. . . .

Somerville Journal, December 3, 1870

One of the most prominently sited houses in this subdivision, consisting primarily of Warren and Columbus Avenues, was James H. Brooks' Second Empire Style residence at 61 Columbus. The square tower with iron cresting could be seen from Union Square at the foot of the hill. Brooks was a dry goods dealer in Union Square. Nearby, Ira Hill platted Summit Avenue into large lots also intended for businessmen's spacious homes. Among the first builders were Boston produce dealer Greenleaf W. Simpson (48 Walnut, corner Summit) and Lydia

M. Runey (14 Summit), whose Second Empire Style houses established a standard of style and expense which was upheld until the turn of the century.

For the many laborers who came to Somerville after the Civil War, a variety of cheaper housing was built on the short streets of the southern slope of Prospect Hill. Two story, gable-roofed frame houses with scrollwork or brackets at the entrance or cornice were built by speculators for sale to this group. Homer Court, Wesley Park, and portions of Putnam and Prescott Streets filled with these simple houses, often built in uniform rows.

During the building boom of the 1880s, many large single family houses were constructed on Prospect Hill and Highland Avenue for Somerville's most prominent citizens. The development of Central Park around the city hall, high school, public library, and firehouse situated on Central Hill between Walnut and School Streets encouraged the construction of an adjacent fashionable residential district. Highland Avenue, which extended from Medford Street to Central Street until 1870, was later extended to Davis Square. Frequent changes in the buildings and grounds altered the 1874 park created on Central Hill, although photographs reveal that the park was still the site of elaborate fountains and gardens in the late nineteenth century. Importantly, it was the focus of a series of fashionable apartment hotels built in the 1880s and 1890s, including the Ideal, with a roof garden, and the Romanesque Highland, designed by architect Samuel D. Kelley.



Prospect Hill Monument Dedication, 1903.



137 Highland Avenue, ca. 1860. This exceptional Italianate house atop Central Hill has a trefoil window in the gable end and a cupola which provides views of the surrounding area.

As was the pattern elsewhere in the city, the construction of single-family homes fell off sharply at the turn of the century, and the population gradually shifted from businessmen-owners to non-resident owners. Among the last to build a palatial home on Prospect Hill was Louville V. Niles. Born in North Hay, Maine, Niles moved to Boston in 1860. In 1870 he formed a partnership with his brothers in the provision business. Niles moved his family to Somerville in 1882 and purchased the Bradshaw estate on Walnut Street. In 1890 he erected a fine Queen Anne Style residence on the site. Niles' company merged with the Boston Packing and Provision Company in 1896. Niles is typical of the late nineteenth century resident of Prospect Hill. His neighbors were characteristically Boston provision, grain, or leather dealers or merchants. They commuted to Boston by horsecar and train, and later by electric streetcar.

Prospect Hill: The Hill

The Prospect Hill locality is destined to be one of our most valuable communities, both in delightful residences and social attractiveness. . . .

So began a description of the area in 1882, echoing earlier predictions. By 1882, however, the historic drumlin known as Prospect Hill had been carved away for the filling of the Miller's River. In 1869, the *Boston Post* published the plea of a Somerville resident to save the hill which had so much symbolic importance for the town. Asking that the town purchase the hill for a park, the writer argued that the land would decrease in value if the hill was totally razed, and that the "removal of the old forts will destroy the interest in the town and the spot which is now so well known and much visited." In 1870, a group of Somerville businessmen proposed the construction of a summer hotel on Prospect Hill. However, the site was excavated for fill, selling at 25¢ per load. Only a small mound was left at the original elevation. Between 1874 and 1903, civic improvement groups, including the Prospect Hill

Improvement Society and the Heptorean Women's Club lobbied for a park to commemorate the role of Prospect Hill in the Revolutionary War. In 1903, a crenellated granite monument and park designed by city engineer Ernest Bailey was constructed by the City of Somerville.

Highland Avenue

Highland Avenue, originally part of an old route known as "Barberry Lane" or "Middle Way" extended only as far as Central Street until 1870. Between Medford Street and Central Street, Highland bordered Ira Thorp's dairy farm at the corner of Highland and Walnut, Revolutionary War fortifications on Central Hill and after 1884, a succession of Unitarian churches, schools and libraries built on Central Hill.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Highland Avenue had a small collection of Greek Revival and Italianate houses, primarily built for farmers and milk-dealers. As Central Hill became the focus of civil buildings, elegant mansard-roofed houses and row houses were built along the avenue, their cupolas and upper story windows taking advantage of views to the north and south. After the extension of Highland Avenue to Davis Square in 1870, apartment rows and hotels were constructed by real estate dealers.

Highland Avenue also became the site of several large single-family homes. In the 1880s and 1890s, architect George Loring designed several elaborate houses for Highland Avenue land-owners (including his own house at 76 Highland). At the turn of the century, stores and shops began to replace the houses of the previous decades. East of Cedar Street, two and three family houses were built by local carpenters and contractors.

A number of churches were built along Highland Avenue, including the 1894 First Unitarian Church by architects Hartwell and Richardson. (This is the last church of the congregation to be erected on Highland; three previously were built between 1844 and 1869 on Central Hill.) Across the street is the First Universalist Church (1916-1923) by Ralph Adams Cram, America's foremost practitioner of Gothic architecture.

Prospect Hill: An Architectural View



19 Greenville Street, ca. 1850. One of the first houses built on the back-slope of Prospect Hill.



Robert Munroe House, 37 Walnut Street, ca. 1849.



Ira Hill House, 91 Boston Street, ca. 1850. Realtor Ira Hill, the developer of much of Union Square and Prospect Hill, resided in this once-Greek Revival house in the 1870s. In the 1890s, the house was "modernized" with a Queen Anne bay and conical roof. Previously the property was owned by members of the Munroe family.



39 Columbus, ca. 1871. One of the first houses built in the Ira Hill subdivision was owned by Artemas C. Richardson, a Boston truckman. The mansard-roofed design was probably built by Thomas Blaikie, a Somerville carpenter who worked on many Prospect Hill houses in the 1870s.

48 Walnut Street, ca. 1875.



17 Aldersey Street, 1869. This example of a well-conserved Second Empire house on Prospect Hill was owned and possibly built by Adoniram J. Taylor. Taylor was a carpenter who may have also built the Round House at 36 Atherton Street. The mansard-roofed house at the rear was formerly a stable.



Photograph 1989



48 Vinal Avenue, ca. 1874. This gable-roofed, Italianate Style house has paired brackets at the eaves, a two-story projecting bay, and rope-beaded moldings at the corner boards. The lot was subdivided by Robert Vinal from Ira Hill's plan of 1870. Builders Silas and Emma Parker sold it to James and Sophia Burnett. Burnett was a machine blacksmith in Boston.

26 Summit Avenue, ca. 1886. John E. Sylvester was a spike manufacturer with a factory on Franklin Street. His Queen Anne Style house was carefully detailed, with pressed wood foliate designs on the gable ends, and a frieze of foliate trim.



The Highland, 66 Highland, 1892. Samuel Dudley Kelley, architect. Boston architect Kelley was a noted designer of apartment buildings. His 1892 design for the Highland was advertised throughout the Boston area. The brownstone-trimmed brick building was finished with marble entrances, tile floors, and oak trim and offered excellent views from its Central Hill site.

The Grandview, 82 Munroe Street, 1892. Mark Leighton, architect. The Grandview apartment house was built by Somerville alderman Eldbridge G. Park. Originally, the building contained six suites of seven rooms. The Doric-columned porch is an original feature.





Munroe Street Houses, ca. 1900. Many Somerville builders appreciated the views from Prospect Hill to the south and east, as the cupolas, dormers, porches and balconies of these nineteenth century houses attest.



97 Munroe Street, ca. 1895. Developed by Louville Niles, built by Thomas Blaikie and/or sons.



9, 11 Summit Avenue, ca. 1890. Two similar Queen Anne Style houses were designed by architect E. K. Blaikie. 11 Summit was originally the residence of Robert S. Wright, a furniture designer with the East Cambridge firms of A. B. and E. L. Shaw. It was later the home of provision dealer Charles F. Hastings.

3 Summit Avenue, ca. 1888. The first owner of this double Queen Anne Style house was grocer George Hills, who sold the property in 1895 when he moved to California. Terra cotta tiles and a variety of decorative shingle work are intact features of the original design.

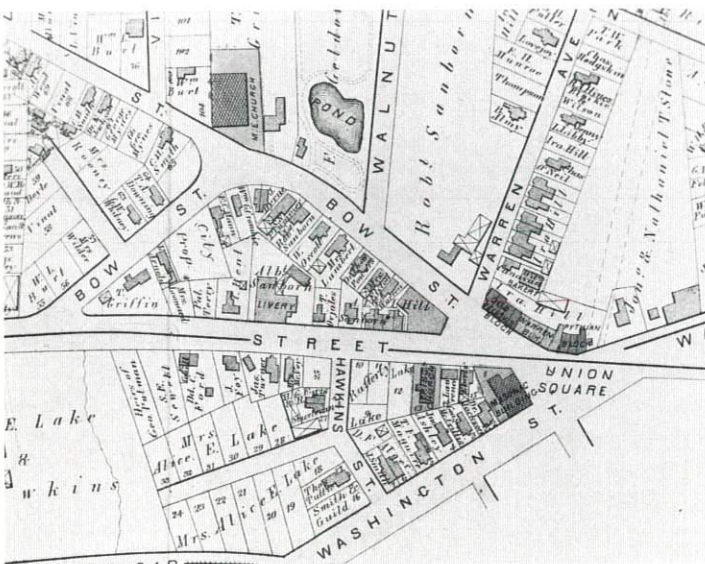


42 Vinal Avenue, ca. 1890. Excellent example of the small shingle-clad Shingle Style house.

6 A and B Giles Park, ca. 1900. A broken scroll pediment at the entrance is a distinctive feature of this Prospect Hill apartment house.



Union Square



Union Square, 1874.

Union Square is Somerville's oldest and largest commercial district. Situated at the intersection of Somerville Avenue, Washington Street, and Bow Street, the development of the Square has paralleled the city's residential and commercial growth. Although the history of the Square begins well before Somerville became a town, only one pre-Civil war building is standing today.

The three main streets of Union Square originated as seventeenth and eighteenth century trade routes. Farm products from the Charlestown mainland and surrounding towns were brought through Union Square via Charlestown Lane (Milk Row, later Somerville Avenue) to be ferried or carried across bridges to Boston. After 1803, the Medford Turnpike (Mystic Avenue) funneled traffic from the north near the Square; Medford Street intersected the Square in 1813. As early as 1770, the Piper Tavern near Stone Street provided refreshment; a few wheelwright's and blacksmith's shops also served the travelers.

In 1838, Charlestown financed a two-story wooden engine house for the mainland. Built at the corner of Washington and Prospect Streets, it was replaced in 1856 by a brick Greek Revival station built on the same site.

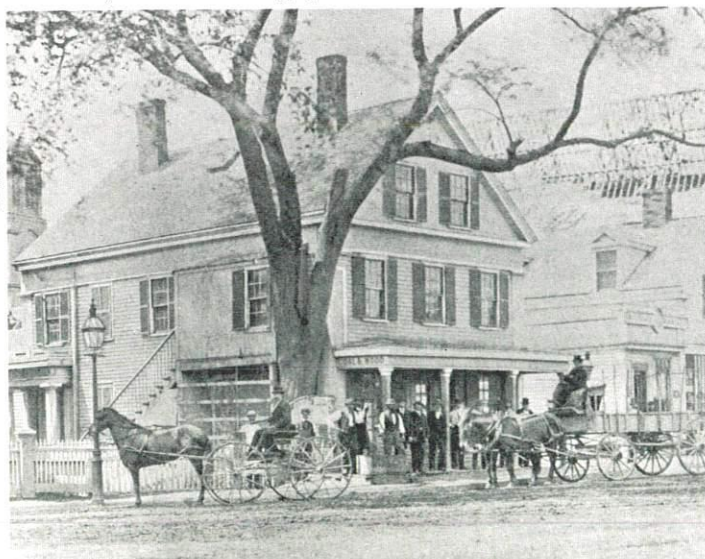
The marshland and sandy soils of the Union Square area yielded a fine grade of silica, and suggested its first name as "Sandpit Square." Claypits were dug throughout the area. Hiram Allen's ropewalk, run by tide power, was situated at the edge of a marsh at the edge of the Miller's River near Allen Street. (Bow Street originally skirted a marsh; Somerville Avenue was constructed over the marsh in 1813.)

Brickyards, slaughterhouses, and the Union Glass Company were among the largest mid-nineteenth century industries near the Square. These concerns were joined by wood-working shops, ice businesses, and carriage factories by the end of the century. All of these industries had an impact on the landscape of Union Square. Filling of the Miller's River to alleviate pollution, and filling of the marshlands for road and factory construction altered the pine grove which extended from Prospect Street (originally Pine Street) to Cambridge Street in Cambridge, and the marshland which extended from Newton Street to Oak Street and beyond. One early Somerville resident remembered the snipes, red-winged blackbirds, and robins which congregated in the marshlands of Union Square.

A flagpole was erected in the Square by Somerville firemen in 1853, and subsequently the area was known as "Liberty Pole Square." During the Civil War, the Square served as a recruitment center, then acquiring its present name.

By 1865, Union Square had a number of dwellings, including the pre-Revolutionary house of Jonathan Stone (near Stone Avenue), Henry Adams (near Wesley Court) and Nathan Tufts (near Medford and Washington Streets). The early nineteenth century estates of the Vinal and Bonner fami-

The Oasis, ca. 1850. Photograph ca. 1873. Razed.





S.P.N.E.A.

lies were also situated near the Square. Several farms, particularly those devoted to market gardening, were in operation near the Square in the mid-nineteenth century. Some of the houses also served as grocery stores or shops. One Union Square landmark was "The Oasis," built about 1850 near Webster Street. The Oasis served as a grocery and local meeting place, its large front porch cooled by an elm tree.

Union Square's commercial and residential opportunities were enhanced by the railroad. In 1835, the first passenger railroad station in the Somerville area was opened on the south side of Washington Street. This station, on the Lowell Railroad, was joined by the Kent Street station of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1842. In 1845, horsecar service was established between the Square and Harvard Square along Kirkland and Washington Streets, the first of several horsecar lines to run through the area.

In 1852, grain dealer Robert Vinal built the first large multi-purpose building in the Square. Vinal's Franklin Hall, a frame structure, served as a post office, grain and grocery store, and as a hall for meeting and entertainments. The Franklin Institute (a library and debating association) was also held in the building. Architecturally, however, Union Square did not acquire an impressive commercial character until the construction of several substantial business blocks after the Civil War.

The first major commercial block was the frame Masonic Block, built in 1869 by four local investors including Phillip Eberle, a shoe dealer. The Masonic Block housed an apothecary, Eberle's shoe shop, and a variety of professional offices in addition to providing meeting rooms for fraternal organizations. (Eberle also built the 1884 Eberle Block, a brick structure at 31-34 Union Square). The 1874 brick and granite Hill

Union Square, ca. 1915. The 1874 Hill Building is at the center of the photograph. The upper stories have been since removed. Other extant buildings are the 1887 Prospect Hill Congregational Church, the 1874 Methodist Episcopal Church and the 1908 Somerville National Bank.

Masonic Block, 1869. Razed.



Somerville Historical Society



Doctor's Row, E. C. Mann House, 46 Bow Street, ca. 1868. Boston grocer E. C. Mann was an early owner of this eclectic frame residence. In the 1890s, the houses on the south side of Bow Street were occupied by doctors' offices, earning the title of "Doctor's Row."

William Bonner House, 17 Bonner Avenue, ca. 1850. The large building lot located in an otherwise densely developed neighborhood evokes something of the original setting of this now-altered Greek Revival house. Beginning about 1820, with farmer Peter Bonner, Union Square was the home of several generations of the Bonner family. William Bonner was a coal dealer and Fitchburg Railroad clerk; George C. Bonner, who lived here in the 1870s, was a conductor for the Boston and Lowell Railroad.



Photograph 1989

Building was the project of local realtor Ira Hill, and was built by Somerville carpenter Thomas Blaikie. Hill also financed the Pythian Block (ca. 1872) and the Warren Hotel (1872). With the later Colson Block (1890), and Stone Block (1891), these buildings created a commercial district of high-styled architecture. Red brick with granite sills and trim, dark bands of contrasting brick, and patterned slate roofs trimmed with ornamental ironwork contributed to the Square's architectural effect.

The City of Somerville built three major buildings in the Square between 1874 and 1932. The extant 1874 Police Station at 50 Bow Street designed by G. A. Clough echoed the Victorian Gothic style of the nearby churches and commercial buildings. The building retains its light granite trim, but the mansard roof of the original design has been removed. The 1903 Fire Station by Walter T. Littlefield was built on the wedge of land between Prospect Street, Washington Street and Somerville Avenue. Early proposals for the building called for a public square at the western end of the triangle. In 1932, a Neoclassical Police Station was built at 66-70 Union Square.

Several Somerville investors built multi-unit rowhouses and apartment hotels in Union Square. Three are of particular significance: the 1892 Richmond, the 1898 Drouet Block, and the ca. 1900 crescent-shaped apartment building at the intersection of Bow and Summer Streets. The Richmond and Drouet Block were built by E. Charles Drouet, a Somerville realtor. Both buildings had stores at the street level with large display windows. These buildings served the many commuters who used Union Square's excellent electric streetcar service to reach jobs in Boston. Reportedly, electric streetcars made 88 stops per day in Union Square by 1900.

Union Square: An Architectural View



15 Union Square, ca. 1845. The oldest extant building in the square, this Greek Revival store and residence was originally owned by Robert A. Vinal. The "Oasis" was situated to the east of this building.



Union Square, 1982.

Photograph 1989



Eberle Building, 31-34 Union Square, ca. 1884. The third floor of this Queen Anne commercial block was used for meetings and social events, and held 800 people.



Somerville Journal Building, 8-10 Walnut Street, 1894. This brick building was designed to accommodate new printing equipment, including the linotype machine.

Union Square Fire Station, 1903-04. Walter T. Littlefield, architect. Like all of Somerville's early fire stations, this building originally had a tall hose-drying tower. At the Union Square Station, the tower was capped by an octagonal roof and Colonial weathervane.





First United Methodist Church, 1 Summer Street, 1858–1874. The 90-foot, polychrome slate steeple which originally completed the east tower of the facade was removed after a 1938 hurricane.



St. Joseph's Church, Washington Street and Union Square, 1874. James Murphy, architect. The city's first Catholic Church retains its original tower and spire. A high-styled Second Empire Style house (ca. 1875), now a rectory, and a ca. 1890 three-story school (ca. 1890) complete the church complex.



Prospect Hill Congregational Church, 17 Bow Street, 1887. One of several churches built in Union Square in the 1870s and 1880s, the Prospect Hill Church retains all of its original surfaces and details. Designed by Henry S. McKay, the church was founded by Somerville Dairy owner H. P. Hood and other prominent local businessmen.



Drouet Block, 58-68 Bow Street, 1898. Aaron Gould, architect.



The Richmond, 33-37 Bow Street, 1892. Aaron Gould, architect.



Crescent Row, Bow and Summer Streets, 1900.

Jenney Gas Station, ca. 1915. One of the earliest gasoline stations in Somerville.



57-61 Union Square. A Portuguese grocery store reflects the concentration of Portuguese residents near the Square. This grocery is located in the former Barrister's Hall or Stone Block built in 1891 on the site of the pre-Revolutionary War Piper's Tavern. The Stone Block was originally used as the main office of the Somerville Savings Bank. The building has been modernized and the original materials (brick and granite) covered.



East Somerville



Unidentified Broadway House, ca. 1815. This three-story, Federal Style house was torn down ca. 1900.

East Somerville excels every other section of our city in maturity and charm of social life, and comprises more average residential beauty than any other locality. The average excellence is so great that it is difficult for individual houses to win special praise, . . . though there is noticeable lack of land about the houses, there is the best use made of what there is, so that the street shade and garden flora are all that can be asked for in such a thickly settled community where an unfavorable fashion prevails of setting the houses as near the street as possible.

East Somerville has by many years the social start of the other sections of the city, and is blessed with a homogeneous population of public-spirited, well-to-do, progressive men of popular talents and untarnished characters who will long maintain the ascendancy in our social life.

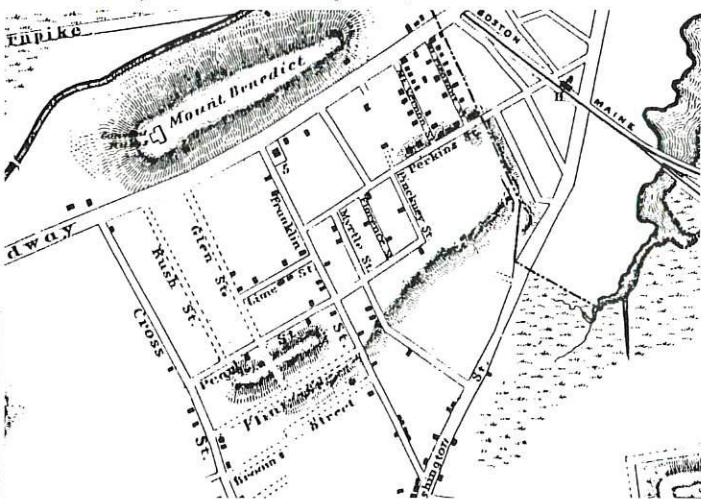
Somerville Journal, August 5, 1882

East Somerville is situated near the narrow peninsula which connects Somerville and Charlestown. At settlement, two glacial drumlins or hills created the northern and southern natural boundaries of the area. One of the drumlins, (called Ploughed Hill in the eighteenth century and Mt. Benedict in the nineteenth) was taken down and used as landfill between 1870 and 1900. At settlement, a substantial portion of the area west of Franklin Street was clay land and swamp. The tidal swamplands were drained by the outlet of Miller's Creek, a tributary of the Charles River. The topographically diverse setting thus provided both well-drained building sites and areas suitable for industrial land use. In the nineteenth century, the brickyards near Washington Street were the most notable industrial land use, but spike factories, ropewalks, and potteries were also important.

Seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century settlement was concentrated along roads corresponding to present-day Washington Street, Cross, and Franklin Streets. Cross and Franklin were not generally travelled as public roads, although they were designated as rangeways in 1658. Another early route, known as Barberry Lane or Middle Way, began near Cross Street and ran west as far as School Street. Washington Street and a portion of the Winter Hill Road (or Broadway) were well-travelled. Washington Street originally the "Road to Newtowne", is the city's oldest road, following the route of an Indian path used to pass between the Mystic peninsula and Fresh Pond.

Prior to the Revolution, approximately five houses were built along the Washington Street corridor and on the southern slope of the hills overlooking it. During the Revolution, several skirmishes took place along this portion of Washington Street, which connected Bunker Hill and General George

Mt. Benedict, from the 1852 Draper Map of Somerville.





Washington's headquarters. To the south, Cobble Hill became the site of fortifications, and is well-described as such on eighteenth century maps.

After the War, Washington Street attracted several small industries. At the town line in 1806 (now opposite the Holiday Inn), a Scottish rope and twine manufacturer, Alexander Gedess, built a small factory and residence. Filling the marshy areas as necessary, other entrepreneurs soon established a vinegar works, a spike and wireworks, a planing mill, and milling shop. Although the area south of Somerville Avenue (Ward II) would become the industrial center of Somerville in the late nineteenth century, the stretch of Washington Street between the Charlestown line and Union Square was the heart of Somerville's mid-nineteenth century industry.

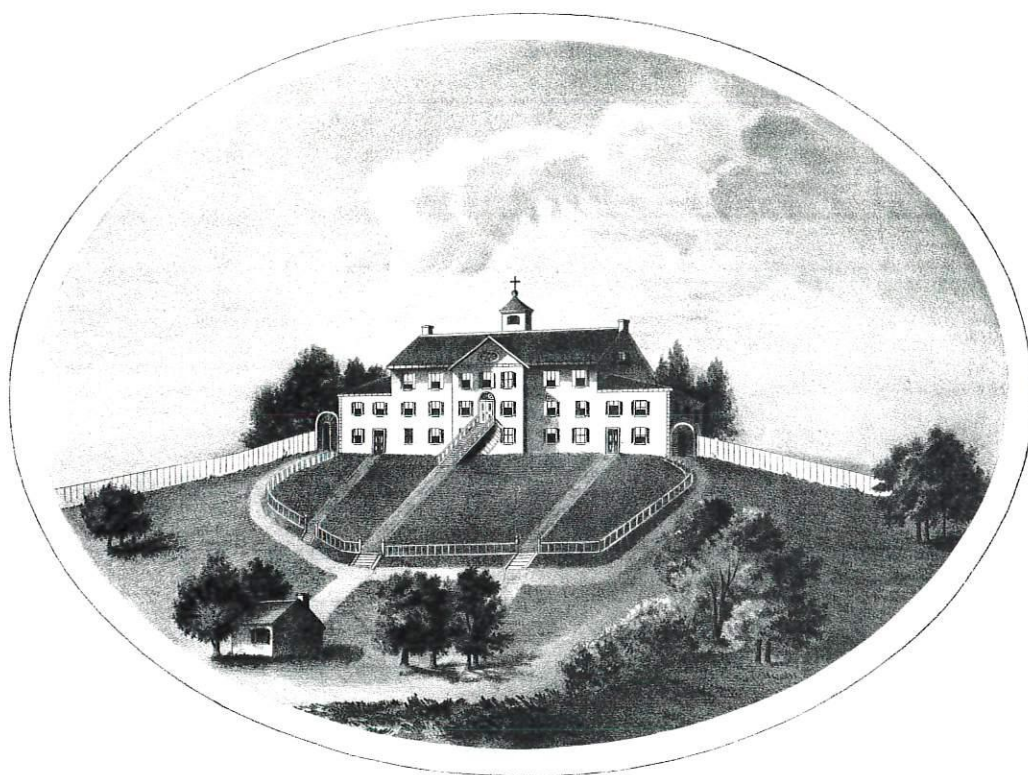
Among the earliest industries in East Somerville was the Runey pottery, located near Cross Street (originally Rangeway 2, or Three Pole Lane), and Flint Street. The redware pottery was first established by John Runey on Main Street in Charlestown. In 1803 Runey purchased a farm on Three Pole Lane and relocated the pottery business. His son, also John Runey, inherited the farm and pottery from his father in 1829. In the 1840's, the second John and his son, John Jr. (as Runey and Co.) moved the business to Vine Street in Cambridge. By 1856 the business returned to the Cross Street location.

Railroad development had a significant impact on the residential character of the area. The Boston and Lowell railroad bisected East Somerville in 1835, with a Washington Street station constructed near Joy Street. The passenger station of the Boston and Maine Railroad extension was opened at the eastern edge of East Somerville in 1842, near Sullivan Square, and the resulting compact residential building pattern was partially attributable to the opening of the station. At least two land speculators laid out streets near the station. The narrow house lots were intended for sale to the businessmen who commuted daily between Somerville and Boston or Charlestown. In 1845,

Charles Pierce laid out 69 lots between Pearl, Perkins, Franklin, and Pinckney Streets. A plan of the Pierce land by surveyors Felton and Parker noted that the new residential area was only "1090 feet from the depot," trumpeting the easy connection to the station. R. Sullivan's 200 lot plan of 1846 similarly intended for commuters extended from Oliver to Broadway, and from Cross to Franklin. A portion of the extensive Stearnes estate was subdivided for Mt. Vernon and Mt. Pleasant Streets by 1840, and Edward Cutter platted Cutter Street and a portion of Lime (now Webster Street) in 1849. This early subdivision activity was all concentrated between the Charlestown line and Cross Street; farther west, the farmland between Cross and Walnut was generally unbuilt until after the Civil War. Many new streets, however were speculatively entered in plan books, but not built up until a decade or more later.

Broadway originated as the seventeenth century route between Medford and Charlestown. Known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the Winter Hill Road, it connected to Medford via Main Street. Like Washington Street, Broadway had a scattering of eighteenth century farms, and in the early nineteenth century, a few shops and taverns were concentrated near the Neck. By 1804, the Medford Turnpike was built to intersect Broadway just over the present-day Somerville/Charlestown line, and the Middlesex Canal was completed, bisecting the clay lands north of Broadway. The Boston and Maine extension later cut across the canal, Broadway, and the Turnpike. By 1850 there was a small collection of toll houses, omnibus stations, shops, and residences near the intersection of canal and turnpikes. The canal was abandoned in the 1840s, and gradually filled.

After 1846 many of the new residents of East Somerville, particularly those along Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Vernon and Pearl Streets, were Boston businessmen. However, new Somerville industries attracted laborers, and in the 1860s and 1870s the



factories adjacent to Washington Street spawned numerous blocks of workers' houses. Franklin Avenue and Myrtle, Florence and Pinckney Streets still have the single and multi-family dwellings from this period. The greatest period of residential development occurred between 1875 and 1885, as apartment rows and two family tenements were constructed throughout the area by speculators.

Between 1860 and 1885, several fine Greek Revival and Italianate houses were also constructed by prominent citizens such as Charles Williams, a Boston hat dealer (108 Cross); Ebenezer Davis, a Boston Marine inspector (8 Mt. Vernon); and Gustavus Prescott, a merchant (67-69 Perkins). Charlestown tannery owner Charles Guild (1825-1896) was among those who constructed elegant Second Empire style houses in the 1860's. Later Queen Anne style houses along Perkins and Pearl Streets indicate that well-to-do individuals sustained interest in East Somerville through the nineteenth century.

Ploughed Hill/Mt. Benedict.

North of Broadway, the Pennsylvania Avenue and Blakely Avenue residential area is situated on the site of a glacial drumlin which was taken down for use as landfill for other areas of Somerville. Today, only Austin and Benedict Streets at the far eastern edge of Mt. Benedict give any indication of the previous elevation of the site. High Field or Ploughed Hill, as it was known in the eighteenth century, was probably under cultivation and used as grazing land before Prospect or Winter Hills, and was outside the area designated by Charlestown as the "Stinted Common". The strategic location of this prominent landform led to its fortification during the Revolutionary War. In 1824, the western end was chosen by the Ursulines of the Mt. Benedict Community as the site for a convent. Historian Samuel Drake described the appearance of the convent site and the city surrounding it in 1876:

The situation, though bleak in winter, commands a superb view of the meadows through which the Mystic

winds, and the towns which extend themselves along the opposite shores. Beyond these are seen the gray, rocky ridges, resembling in their undulations some huge monster of antiquity. Perched on their rugged sides appear the cottages and villas of a population half city, half rural, but altogether distinctive in the well-kept, thrifty appearance of their homes.

The well-staffed convent was established to educate young women, and was attended by Catholics and Protestants. In 1834, rumors about problems in the convent spread to Boston and the surrounding area, and the rumors eventually incited a riot. On August 11, the convent was destroyed in a fire set by an angry group of anti-Catholic protesters. Drake also provided a description of the buildings after they were in ruin:

The form of the main building of the convent, which faced southeast, was a parallelogram of about thirty-three pages long by ten in breadth; what appear to have been two wings joined it on the west side. The buildings were partly of brick and partly of the blue stone found abundantly in the neighboring quarries; the principal edifice being of three stories, with a pitched roof, and having entrances both in the east and west fronts. The grounds, which were very extensive, and embraced most of the hill, were terraced down to the highway and adorned with shrubbery. A fine orchard of several acres, in the midst of which the buildings stood, extends on the west quite to the limits of the enclosure, where are still visible the remains of the convent tomb. A few elms and other shade-trees are still standing on the hillside, and in the season of their verdure interpose a kindly screen between the wayfarer and the blackened ruins. In spite of the air of desolation and neglect, the place still possesses some relics of its former beauty.



After the destruction of the convent, the land remained in possession of the Roman Catholic Church until 1870, when it was purchased by Seman Klous, a brickmaker and land dealer. At the western edge of the hill there was some residential development by 1870; Austin and Benedict Streets are also evidence of the former elevation of the site. To the northeast, at the foot of the old route of the Middlesex Canal, Tenney Court and Canal Street were platted on the former Robert Tenney farm. Situated near the Mystic Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad, a collection of brickyard and railroad workers' houses and shops were built here after the Civil War.

Seman Klous subdivided the vacant land of Mt. Benedict for residential lots and began to sell off the hill as landfill for the nearby Mystic River marshes near Middlesex Avenue. Klous' proposed subdivision adjoined Broadway Park, and was originally intended to have a central landscaped boulevard connecting with the park. This plan was not executed, and the land remained vacant for another forty-two years.

In 1912, the Somerville Homebuilder's Association replatted the twenty-eight acre area and constructed 268 two and three family houses. The Association was formed for the purposes of selling land and houses on the former Mt. Benedict. The gambrel and hip-roofed houses were sold for \$5200 to \$6700. The **Somerville Journal** described the development in 1913:

A new city is springing up, a miniature city of homes, a modern city, a city of electric lights and granolithic pavements, healthy, airy. . .

Somerville Journal, January 3, 1913

The subdivision streets were named after states, with a main east-west avenue, Pennsylvania.

In the first years of the twentieth century, Broadway between the Charlestown or "Neck" line and Broadway Park developed steadily as a commercial center. Stores, garages and shops, as well as a number of fraternal organizations, and theatres replaced the last eighteenth and early nineteenth century

farmhouses, including those of the Stearnes and Cutter families. In 1915, the Hurst Broadway Theater was completed. Designed for vaudeville and motion pictures, the elaborate facade of the original design has been obscured by several decades of alterations.

The construction of the Northern Artery (McGrath Highway) in 1925 resulted in the moving or demolition of houses, as well as the eradication of several streets. The Artery created a permanent seam between East Somerville and the eastern edge of Winter Hill, which shares a similar housing stock. In 1925-27, the filling of the Mystic River marshes near Middlesex Avenue for the construction of the Ford Assembly Plant and A and P warehouses also changed the landscape of the eastern edge of East Somerville. The new factories and warehouses attracted hundreds of workers to an area formerly occupied by only a handful of brickmakers.

Ursuline Convent—Engraved View.

Pennsylvania Avenue houses, ca. 1912. Two-family, gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival houses were built by the Somerville Homebuilders Association.

East Somerville: An Architectural View



H. M. Hutchins House, 16 Mt. Vernon, ca. 1850. Harrison M. Hutchins was a “whitener” (bleachery employee) who worked for a Boston firm, according to the 1869 **Directory of Somerville, Arlington and Belmont**. The Hutchins House is an excellent example of the three-bay Greek Revival house found in East Somerville. A Doric-columned porch, 6 over 6 sash, and pedimented gable are features of the original design.



Gustavus G. Prescott House, 65–67 Perkins, ca. 1840. Possibly predating the separation of Somerville from Charlestown, this was considered a “country” home when built. Prescott was a Charlestown merchant, according to the 1851 Somerville Directory.



Rogers Store, 15 Franklin, ca. 1850. Early combination store and dwelling. Burned 1982.



Nathan Tufts-Charles Williams, Jr. House, 1 Arlington St., ca. 1858. 1 Arlington Street is an excellent example of an Italianate house with later Eastlake Style trim. 1 Arlington was also the terminus of the world's first outdoor experimental telephone line. Charles Williams, Jr. bought the house from Nathan Tufts in 1876. Williams was a protege of Alexander Graham Bell, and Bell and Watson's first telephone was developed in 1875 at Williams' electrical shop at 109 Court Street, Boston.



Fountain Street Worker's Houses, 1888. Augustus Dickson, a Malden builder, built these houses described in 1888 as “new and convenient”. The row of ten houses were uniform in plan and exterior treatment and each house was priced at \$1900.



Grace Baptist Church, 59 Cross Street, 1892.

Grace Baptist Church, 59 Cross Street, 1892. The designer of this Romanesque Revival edifice is unknown. It was constructed at a cost of \$46,000. The congregation was first organized in 1845 as the Neck Village Baptist Church and was later known as the Charlestown and Somerville Baptist Church. After 1853 it was reorganized as the Perkins Street Baptist Church. At the time of construction, the congregation numbered 375. In 1895, this was one of five Baptist churches in the city.

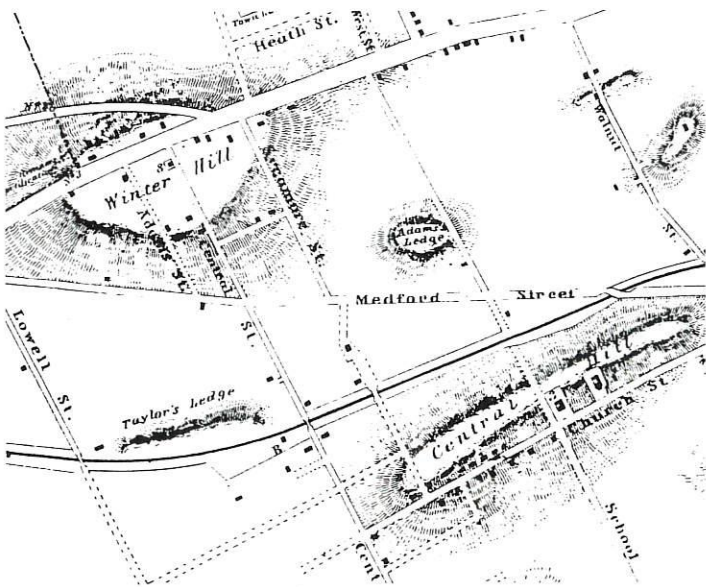
77, 81 Pearl Street, ca. 1868. Variations of the Italianate style, these fine houses are likely the product of the same builder. Both are unique examples; 77 has cushion-capitals, elaborate label window mouldings, and paired pendant brackets.



77 Pearl Street, ca. 1868.



Winter Hill



Map of Winter Hill from 1852 Martin Draper Map of Somerville.

Adams-Magoun House, 438 Broadway, ca. 1783. The fanlight and Federal period millwork of the central entry are unique architecture features.



Winter Hill, from Marshall street to Adams, is a most pleasant community. Marshall Street with its suburbs is close built, near the street, and without special architectural beauty, but every home is so well kept, the yards are so fresh in their well-watered green, and the streets are so elegantly shaded that the pleasure seeker oftentimes drives through these streets for the balmy air they offer him who leisurely regales himself without seeking the country. The settlement upon the hill from the Oakman-Eldridge estate to that of Hittinger and Gulliver, from that of Mrs. Frances A. Sawyer to that of Amos Keyes' charming lawn-enriched home, offers numerous attractions.

Somerville Journal, August 5, 1882

Winter Hill is a 4000 foot long drumlin. Its summit near Broadway and Central street is 135 feet above sea level. At settlement, the drumlin was broken by at least two slate outcroppings, near Evergreen and Vernon Streets.

Broadway, originally called Winter Hill Road, extended from Charlestown to Medford and Arlington, and five seventeenth century rangeways crossed the Winter Hill area. These rangeways correspond to Walnut, School, Central, Lowell, and Cedar Streets. Land between the rangeways was set off to seventeenth century Charlestown settlers. Two eighteenth century homes survive on Winter Hill. The earliest was built ca. 1714 on land set off to Elias Rowe in 1685. General Charles Lee occupied the house during the siege of Boston in 1775. Although there is controversy about the first owner, the house was purchased by Peter Tufts (b. 1728) in 1778. The Tufts farm eventually extended to west Central Street and south across the Boston and Lowell railroad tracks. Sycamore Street originally was the driveway to the house; the building has been moved back from its original location. (The Sycamore Street bridge was constructed to reunite the two halves of the Tufts farm divided by the construction of the Boston and Lowell tracks in 1835.) Oliver Tufts was the last family owner.

Another eighteenth century house which was once part of a large agricultural tract is the Adams Magoun House, built by Joseph Adams in 1783. Joseph Adams married Sarah Tufts, daughter of Peter and Anne Tufts who lived on Broadway opposite Main Street. The Adams' daughter Sarah Ann Adams married John C. Magoun, for whom Magoun Square is named. The 71-acre Adams farm extended from Broadway to the Boston and Main railroad, between Central and Lowell Streets. A large fortification was constructed on the summit of Winter Hill during the Revolution, and 1900 Hessian soldiers were quartered on the southern slope after the War.

Winter Hill's well-drained soil continued to support farms after the Revolution. By 1800, large tracts of land were assembled by farmers, particularly members of the Tufts family, for

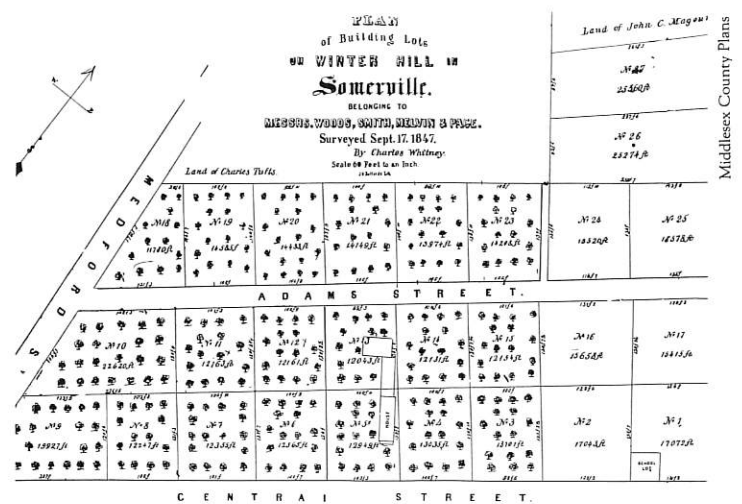
farming and grazing land. No brickyards were developed here, but by 1840 offices for the brickyards of Mystic Avenue and Ten Hills were located along Winter Hill Road, in addition to a few blacksmith's shops and taverns. At the western edge of Winter Hill, Warren Pollard's slate quarry near Vernon and Central Streets was in operation by 1845. Wood-burning locomotives were used to haul cars of stone from the spur tracks in the ledge out on to the main line, destined for East Cambridge or Boston. The Boston and Lowell tracks were laid in 1835, and a passenger station opened near the quarry site soon thereafter. Pollard's small Greek Revival house with a recessed, side-lit entry still stands on Vernon Street across from the quarry site.

In 1847, one section of Central Street was platted for house lots, and was the first such subdivision on Winter Hill. The Greek Revival Adams-Locke House at 178 Central was shown by surveyor Charles Whitney on the original plan of lots. Further subdivision activity was sporadic; the residential areas of East Somerville and Spring Hill grew more quickly than those of Winter Hill.

In 1853, Samuel C. Chamberlain platted a large residential tract including Thurston, Fruit (Dartmouth) and School Streets. No houses were built until the 1880s, however. Other tracts filled, despite building slowdowns caused by the Civil War and the Panic of 1873. In the late 1860s and early 1870s several tracts were laid out by speculators, including Evergreen, Maple, Howe, and Veazie Streets (Radcliffe Road). After the Civil War, the character and cost of residential building was determined largely by location. East of Marshall Street, closely built workers houses and tenements were constructed by speculators. West of Marshall, on the higher elevations, resided many of the speculators as well as a small population of Boston, Charlestown, and Somerville businessmen. Large houses were common here, often surrounded by landscaped grounds. Walnut Street, east of Marshall, is the exception to this pattern. Several fine homes were built on Walnut in the 1860s and 1870s, including those of Stephen W. Fuller, a lumber dealer, and William Veazie, a printer and dealer in real estate. Walnut Street businessmen lived an uneasy distance from the Skilton Pickle Factory near Broadway and Walnut, however. The "Bunker Hill" was one of several pickle factories in the vicinity of Broadway.

Among the subdivisions intended for workers' houses was that platted by Charles Tufts in 1873. Ruby, Eglantine, Jasper and Pearl Streets were laid out, but Pearl and Jasper were the only streets built up. Houses on these carefully-named streets were of the standard 2½ story, gable-roofed variety favored for cheap, quick construction.

Dartmouth, School and Thurston Streets between Medford Street and Broadway were once considered a fine residential district. As noted, Samuel Chamberlain entered a plat for the area as early as 1853. No houses were built, but John R. Poor and Rufus Stickney, partners in the mustard and spice firm of Stickney and Poor, established their own estates on portions of the plat. In 1883, Stickney and Poor entered a new plat of the same streets. The lots were large and intended for the construction of ample businessmen's homes, and by 1890, a fine collection of Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival houses were constructed. Among the first generation of residents were Luke Farmer (92 Thurston) a Boston produce dealer; Charles Grimmons (72 Thurston) a furniture dealer and mayor 1906-8, and Edward Glines (51 Dartmouth) a Boston coffee dealer and mayor 1901-3. Loring and Phipps and Aaron Gould were among architectural firms whose work is represented here. To construct houses and grade streets, it was necessary to fill the old ledge near Evergreen Street long



Plan of House Lots on Winter Hill, 1847. The Adams-Locke House is shown on this early plat of Winter Hill land.



Adams-Locke House, 178 Central Street, ca. 1840. This house, an excellent example of the Greek Revival style, was built for Charles Adams, a farmer, Quincy Market merchant, and state legislator. A later resident, Woodbury Locke, was a Boston leather dealer.

Elias Marston House, 27 Maple Street, ca. 1870. Elias Marston, head master of the Phillips Grammar School in Boston, was the first owner of this Italianate house with an octagonal cupola. When this photograph was made about 1880, the eastern side of School Street was still the apple orchard of John R. Poor, who resided in a Second Empire Style mansion on Broadway.





Odin-Hittinger-Edgerly House, Broadway and Main Street, ca. 1810 with later additions. On the site of Revolutionary War fortifications, this Winter Hill mansion was the home of John Edgerly, for whom Edgerly School was named. Razed.

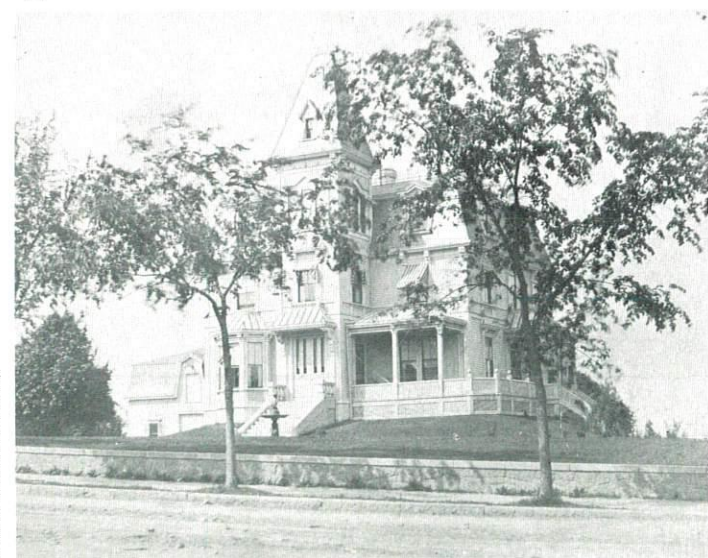
known as "Adams Ledge." The blue slate for foundation of many houses in this subdivision was taken from the ledge. The extensive apple orchard of John Poor's estate was demolished for the construction of homes; reportedly, surviving apple trees shaded the yards of Thurston and Dartmouth Street houses.

Between 1850 and 1910 the Winter Hill section of Broadway (formerly the Winter Hill Road) was a prime site for the construction of large single family houses. The houses were sited to take full advantage of views to the east, including an excellent view of Bunker Hill Monument and the Mystic River, although the banks of the river were scarred by brickyard and excavations. The accompanying photographs illustrate some of the exceptional buildings and grounds which once lined Broadway. The construction of Broadway (now Foss) Park in 1875 and the accompanying improvement of Broadway enhanced Winter Hill's residential appeal. In 1889, Somerville's City Beautification Society was established by a group of Winter Hill residents, and social clubs such as the Heptoreans lobbied for trees, boulevards, parks, and ordinances to prohibit the construction of cheap tenements on small lots.

In the 1880s, Broadway near Marshall Street became the site of several business blocks and fraternal halls. Among them was the brick and granite Odd Fellows Building (1888). Built at a time when several fraternal organizations were constructing impressive buildings, the Odd Fellows structure had a two-story tower at the corner of the four-story facade. After 1900, apartment buildings replaced many of the businessmen's homes of the previous decades. Broadway lost most of its mansions to the construction of four or five story apartments which catered to the growing number of trolley commuters.

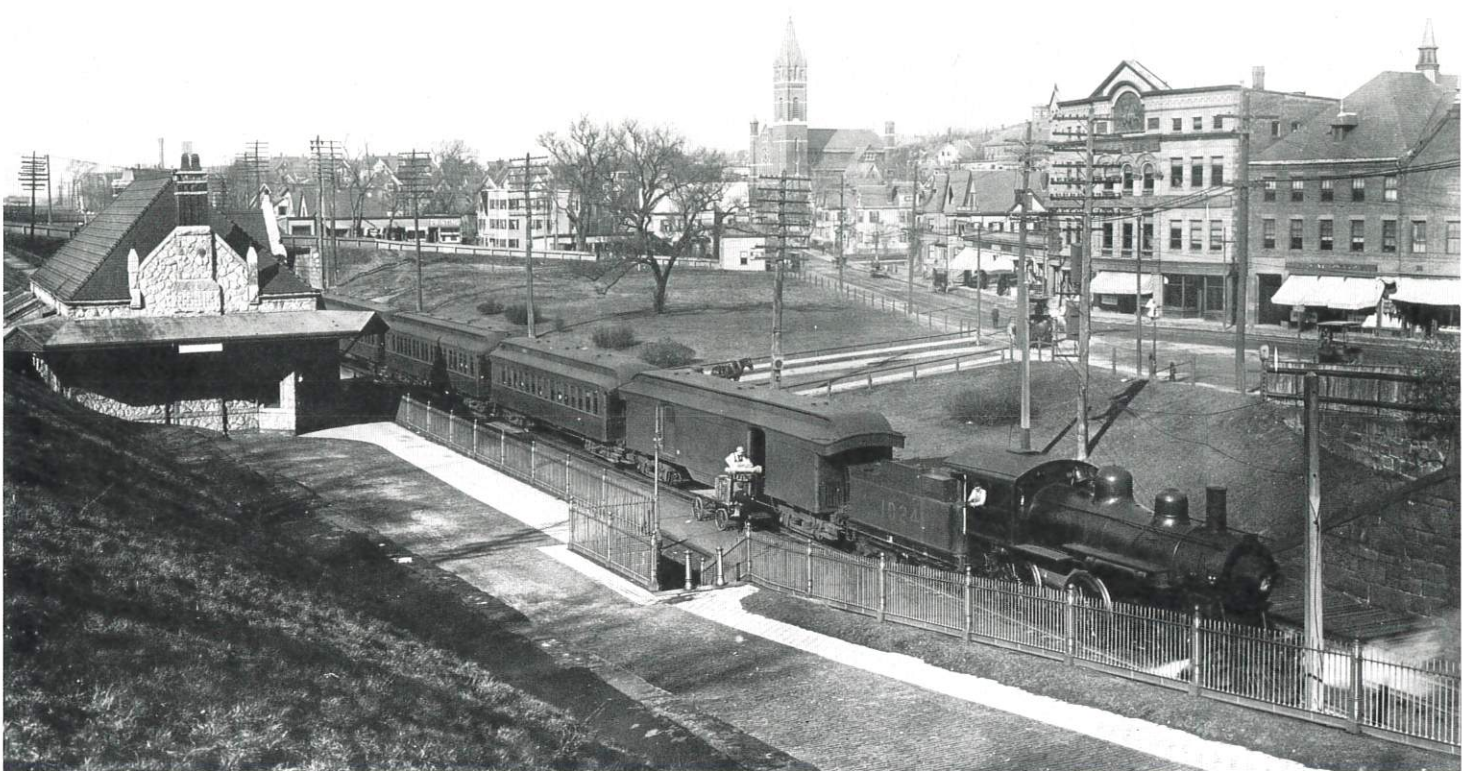
Colonial Revival two family houses and three-deckers filled in Winter Hill's last remaining open space at the turn of the century. Lee and Essex Streets and Richdale Avenue have good examples of these building types. These streets were the site of a potato field until the last portion of the Oliver Tufts farm was subdivided in the 1890s by Tuft's son-in-law, Dr. W. K. Fletcher.

Proctor-Sanborn House, Broadway opposite Central Street, ca. 1870. This Second Empire Style house commanded a view of the Mystic River and the Bunker Hill Monument. Built by Catherine Eldridge Proctor, it was later occupied by shoe manufacturer Horatio H. Hutchins, and later by James S. Sanborn of the coffee firm Chase and Sanborn. Razed.



View of Central Hill from Gilman Square, ca. 1895. A dairy herd was still kept near Gilman Square while businessmen's houses were being constructed in the next block. The Latin School, Public Library, and Unitarian Church are visible on Central Hill.





S.P.N.E.A.

Gilman Square

Between 1885 and 1900, the intersection of Pearl, Medford, and Marshall Streets developed from a small commuter station on the Boston and Lowell to an important commercial center. Charles E. Gilman, who served as town clerk and later city clerk between 1842 and 1886, was one of the major landholders in the area prior to the subdivision of large tracts for residential development. With the subdivision of the Gilman, Tufts and Stickney tracts, the Boston and Lowell station north of the tracks was modernized to accommodate the increased use by residents of Winter Hill. By 1886, 59 week-day trains and 23 Sunday trains stopped at the Winter Hill station. A granite station was constructed in 1888 on the south side of the tracks, creating a handsome focus for the area's other new buildings. In 1888, spice dealer Rufus Stickney built the Masonic Apartments, also known as King Solomon's Lodge and the Stickney Building. A pharmacy, athletic equipment store, post office, and furniture repair shop were among the other tenants of the masonry building. The 1890 Citizen Building, a three-story frame structure, housed the **Somerville Citizen** and the G.A.R. Hall. The **Citizen** was established in response to a "natural demand for a newspaper on the northern slope of the city. . . ." and Winter Hill residents were its primary backers. The now-raised Citizen Building stood at the intersection of Medford and Pearl Streets.

The railroad station was removed in the 1940s after passenger rail service was discontinued. The remaining landmark in Gilman Square is the 1895 Signet Commandery Building, at 341 Medford Street. The gabled pediment and copper relief depicting a knight on horseback are intact original features of the four story masonry facade. Also unaltered is a two story central arcade, trimmed with granite and terra cotta.

One of the last nineteenth century residential subdivisions in the Winter Hill area was the Charles Robinson plat of Ames, Bartlett, Robinson, and Miner Streets laid out in 1890. This subdivision, with a "Y" shaped street configuration, provided sites for commuter's homes, and was advantageously sited near both the Boston and Lowell Station at Central Street and the Medford Street horsecar line.



S.P.N.E.A.

Magoun Square. Photograph ca. 1890. Magoun Square, at the intersection of Broadway (1637), Lowell (an old rangeway) and Medford Street (1813) derives its name from the Magoun family whose farm included most of the land between Broadway and Vernon Streets. In the nineteenth century Magoun Square was a convenient stopping place for teamsters hauling stone, brick, cordwood and farm produce through Somerville into Boston and Charlestown. Originally called "The Corner", it was later named Pollard Square after Darius Pollard, a local druggist. Although most of the commercial blocks date from the early twentieth century, there are several ca. 1845 houses in the immediate area. The property adjacent to Lowell Street was developed for brickyard, railroad, and quarry worker's housing. Many houses were moved into the Magoun Square area, including those of Partridge Street. In 1868, Boston toy manufacturer Horace Partridge platted Partridge and Jenny Lind Streets (the latter is now Glenwood). Partridge moved in a number of brickyard worker's houses from the Happy Hollow section near Broadway Park in the 1870s. Nearby, a collection of Italianate quarry and railroad workers houses survives on Vernon Street, at the edge of the quarry site.

Gilman Square, 1910.

Winter Hill: An Architectural View



Oliver Tufts House, 78 Sycamore Street, 1714.



58 Sycamore Street, ca. 1835. This Greek Revival house is situated near the intersection of the 1835 Boston and Lowell railroad tracks, and Sycamore Street, the original road to the 1714 Oliver Tufts House at 78 Sycamore.



Warren Pollard House, 49 Vernon Street, ca. 1845. Quarry owner Pollard lived in this Greek Revival House opposite his slate quarry. The Greek Revival house has many of its original details, including a recessed sidelit entry. The former quarry site is occupied by the Derby Desk Company Building, now the Vernon Street Artists' Studios and the Rogers Foam Corporation.



Amos Keyes House, 12 Adams Street, ca. 1845. This house was built by produce dealer Keyes on Central Street, and moved to Adams Street when Keyes constructed a new house about 1870. The second Keyes residence, a once high-styled mansard house, is situated at 152 Central Street.

Elisha Hopkins House, 237 School Street, ca. 1868. One of the few houses built along School Street prior to the development of the area in the 1880s, this cross-gable Italianate example has glazed oculi(round windows) in the gable ends. Hopkins was a shipmaster.



457 Medford Street, ca. 1855.





Partridge Avenue: "Happy Hollow" houses, ca. 1855–1860. These simple houses were moved to Partridge Avenue ca. 1874.



Phillip Johnson House, 40 Trull Street, ca. 1868; moved ca. 1890. Originally situated at the corner of Medford and Central streets, this house stood at the top of a series of terraces. The unique roof survives, although other features have been altered. Phillip Johnson was a florist.



John F. Ayer House, 141 Walnut Street, ca. 1870. This mansard-roofed house was built by Charlestown lumber dealer John F. Ayer. Ayer also sold land in Somerville.



192–200 Central Street, ca. 1880. Like its neighbor at 55 Adams Street, this five-unit apartment row was built by real estate dealer and Winter Hill resident Cutler Downer.

Photograph 1989.



Otis-Wyman House, 67 Thurston Street, ca. 1883. Although the original clapboard siding has been covered over, the Otis-Wyman House is one of the city's exceptional late nineteenth-century residences. Most of the original decorative trim, including a picturesque roofline with numerous hooded dormers and cusped bargeboards, is intact. Built in the Stickney subdivision at a time when the area was rapidly becoming the home of Boston and Somerville businessmen, this was the residence of William R. Otis, a cabinetmaker, and later Charles B. Wyman, a restaurant owner.



Veazie Row, Medford Street and Central Avenue, 1890. William Veazie, a Somerville real estate dealer, was the builder of this apartment row situated near the train station at Vernon and Central Streets. Its Queen Anne features, including patterned shingles, are well conserved.

Photograph 1989



Edward Foote House, 419 Broadway, ca. 1865. This Second Empire house (and its fine barn at the rear) was built by Edward Foote, a native of Lee, Massachusetts who moved to Somerville in 1864. In business with George Skilton, his Somerville factory manufactured Bunker Hill brand pickles. Foote also served as president of the Somerville Water Board.

21 Dartmouth Street, ca. 1890. One of the only houses remaining in near-original condition in the Stickney subdivision, this Queen Anne Style house is an excellent example of the shingled, highly decorated buildings built for businessmen. This example evidences the decorated chimney mass, multiple textures and surfaces, and irregular massing associated with the Queen Anne Style.



235 School Street, ca. 1883.





Frank Miles House, 232 School Street, ca. 1885. Frank Miles, a Boston cigar dealer, built this Queen Anne Style house with elaborate stained glass window and brick and clapboard facade.



Walter Glidden House, 380 Broadway, ca. 1898. Among the last large single family houses to be constructed along Broadway was this Queen Anne example built for Walter Glidden, a Boston beef dealer. A shingled stable and granite retaining walls, still extant, were part of the original design for the grounds.

Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church, 404 Broadway, 1891. Hartwell, Richardson, and Driver, architects.



St. Ann's Catholic Church, Medford Street at School Street, 1881. Rebuilt after fire, 1891.



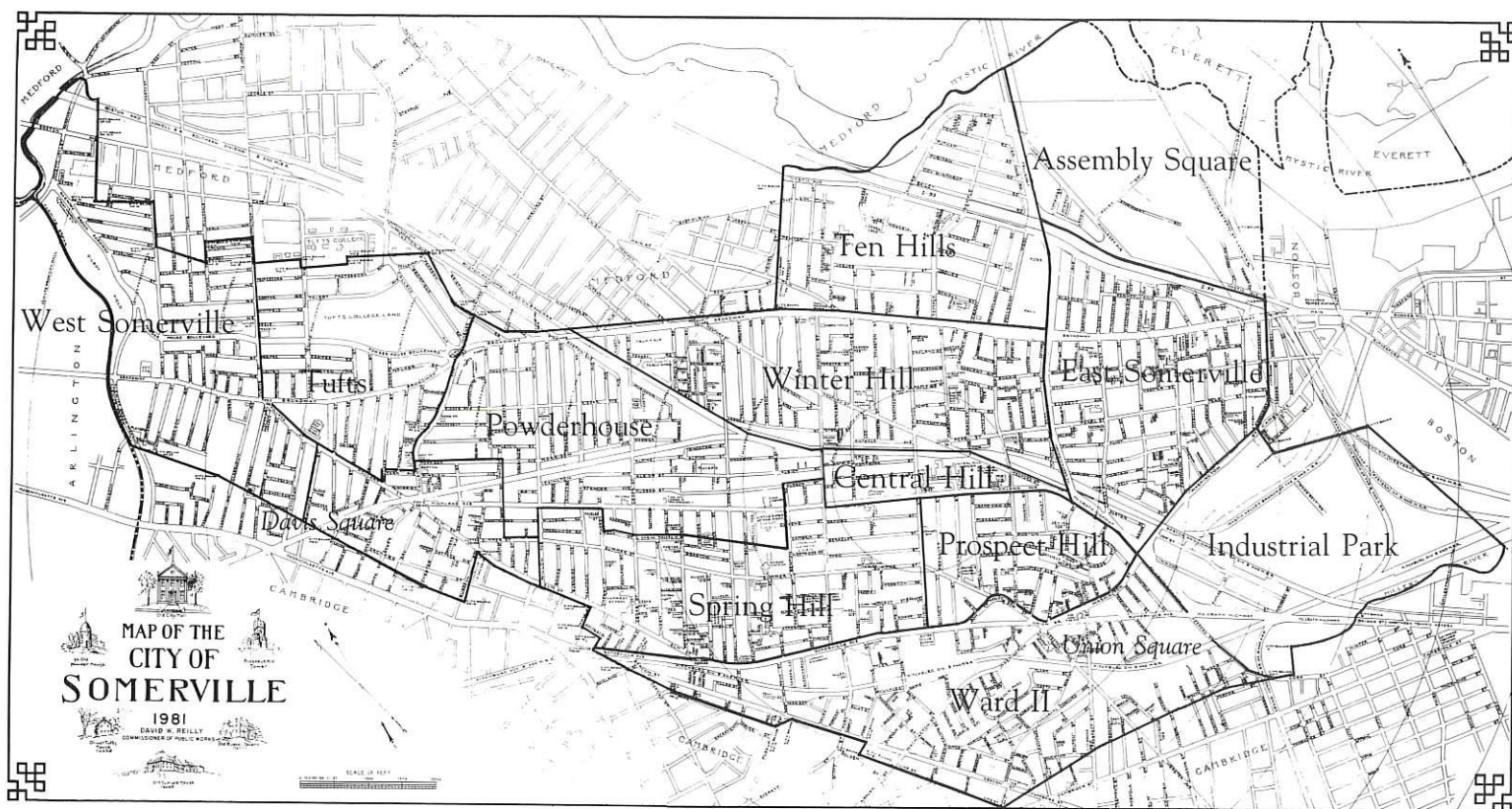
III

An Atlas of Somerville's Neighborhoods and Squares



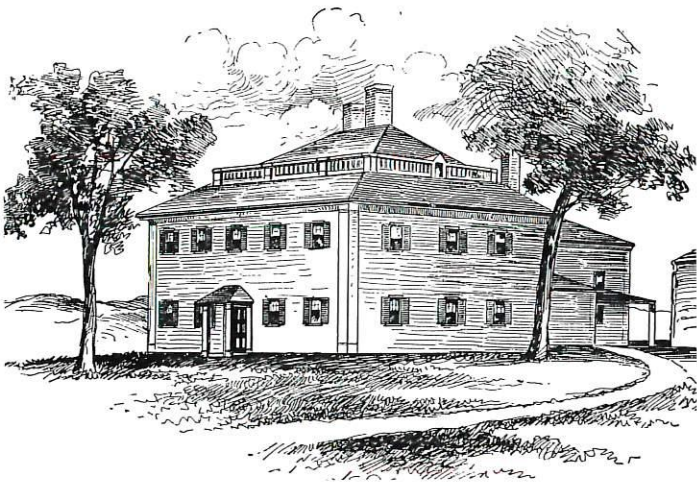
Somerville's early nineteenth century residential development occurred in small, village-like clusters which were often situated around the intersection of road and rail lines. Relatively independent commercial centers sprung up to serve these settlements. As Somerville's network of roads and horsecar, streetcar, and steam train lines drew together at the end of the nineteenth century, the village-like character was lost but the place names and unique neighborhood character endured, and are evident today.

This chapter provides historic maps and photographs which illustrate the architectural and historical development of ten distinct areas of the city. The narrative describes the land base and natural resources of each area, and explains the major phases of development between settlement and the early twentieth century. "An Architectural View" illustrates the variety of architectural styles and building types which are found in the area, with information about builders, developers, and early owners. Maps and atlases, city directories, and published works such as Edward Samuels' *Somerville Past and Present* (1897) assisted the architectural inventory of each area. The *Historic Leaves* published by the Somerville Historical Society between 1899 and 1903 are of particular use in the study of neighborhood history.



Neighborhood Atlas Survey Map

Ten Hills



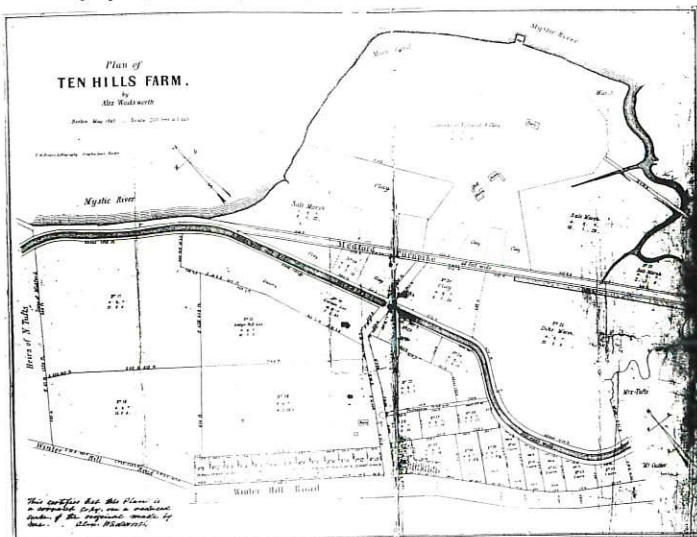
Robert Temple House, ca. 1770. Robert Temple's "manor house" was a two and one half story brick structure with a high-pitched hipped roof, and several additional buildings, or dependencies.

Ten Hills is named for the ten hillocks of the original 750-acre tract deeded to Governor John Winthrop (1588–1694) by the Massachusetts Bay Colony Council in 1630. The original site was bisected by the Mystic River, with 450 acres in present-day Medford. Winthrop chose the southern shore (now Somerville) for the site of his farmhouse. Winthrop's primary residence was in Boston, at the intersection of present-day Washington and School Streets, and he used Ten Hills as a summer residence, stocking the farm with livestock and planting extensive gardens. In 1631, he built and launched the first ship built in the Massachusetts Bay Colony from the banks of the Mystic.

Winthrop was the first of many owners of the farm or estate at Ten Hills. In 1731, Winthrop's heirs sold the Somerville portion to Captain Robert Temple, an Englishman. Temple built a fine house on the former site of Winthrop's. The house was reportedly prefabricated in England and was finished with imported wainscoting and other woodwork. In 1875, historian Samuel Drake described the hipped-roof house:

The mansion house has a spacious hall, and a generous provision of large square rooms. As you ascend the stairs, in front of you, at the first landing, is a glass door, opening into a snug little apartment which overlooks the river. . .

1842 Plan of Ten Hills. Commissioned by Ten Hills estate owner, Samuel Jaques; drawn by surveyor Alexander Wadsworth.



Among four subsequent owners were Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport, Thomas Russell of Salem, Elias Haskett Derby of Salem, and Colonel Samuel Jaques. Jaques, born in 1777 in Wilmington, Massachusetts, made Ten Hills famous as a stock farm. He bought the property in 1832, and used it as an experimental station for the breeding of horses, cattle, sheep and poultry. Jaques was a life member and officer of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, reflecting his interests in agricultural experimentation. He also raised deer, exotic birds, buffalo and hunting dogs. At Ten Hills he enjoyed the company of many visitors, including Daniel Webster, Louis Agassiz and Henry Clay.

Of 36 Somerville farms listed in the 1850 Federal Census of Agriculture, the Jaques farm had the highest valuation, at \$80,000. In 1850, 160 acres were under cultivation and produced 100 tons of hay.

After his death in 1859, Samuel Jaques' sons, Frederick and William, exploited the rich clay resources which underlay the estate, and later sold house lots. Prior to Jaques' death, however, portions of the estate were used as clay yards. The fine Temple-Jaques House was eventually converted to a brickyard workers' tenement and razed in 1877. The high ground on which the house stood was dug away and used as fill for surrounding marshy areas. Clay digging, however, had already marred and broken the land.



To the south of Ten Hills, the Medford Turnpike (Mystic Avenue) was constructed in 1804 as a toll road. By 1866, however, the Turnpike was abandoned, largely a financial disaster for the Medford Turnpike Corporation. The Turnpike was poorly constructed over the boggy soil of the Mystic River land. Along its route, there were a number of brickmakers, many of them buying clay from the Jaques farm to burn in their kilns. The Middlesex Canal, also constructed by 1804, skirted Ten Hills to the south.

A small residential subdivision was platted near Temple Street in 1845 to house brickyard workers. (Temple Street was the route from Broadway to the Temple-Jaques House.) The subdivision was made by James Dana to the west of Temple Street, and included the present-day streets of Jaques, Heath, and Bond. The town of Somerville purchased a lot for use as a Town Lot (or pound) at the intersection of Bond and Jaques. Sewall, Jaques, and Derby were extended to the east of Temple Street in the 1850's. The street names of the area reflect the names of eighteenth and nineteenth century Ten Hills residents.

Another enclave of brickworker's houses in the so-called "Happy Hollow" were situated near Chauncey Street, the present Fellsway West. The brickworker's houses of both Happy Hollow and Temple Street areas appear to have been constructed cheaply and quickly, and are of standard frame construction with few ornamental details. There is evidence of a great deal of house moving in the Ten Hills area. Some of the small brickyard workers' houses were moved as new claypits were excavated. Some were originally built on piles because of the boggy clay soil.

Between the Civil War and the turn of the century, brick-making was the main industrial activity of the Ten Hills area.

View of Ten Hills, 1883. This photograph was taken from a rise of ground near Jaques Street, near the present-day Mystic Housing Project, looking northeast. At the left is the corner of Derby and Temple; Mount Benedict is at the center of the photograph. Brickyards are at the left; the northern end of Broadway (Foss) Park is visible at the right of the photograph.

JAQUES ESTATE WINTER HILL,

Has been purchased by the
undersigned, and

LAI D OUT IN LOTS,

and is offered to the public at a price
that will insure its rapid sale. Those
wishing to secure a

NICE LOT OF LAND

in a desirable locality, can apply to

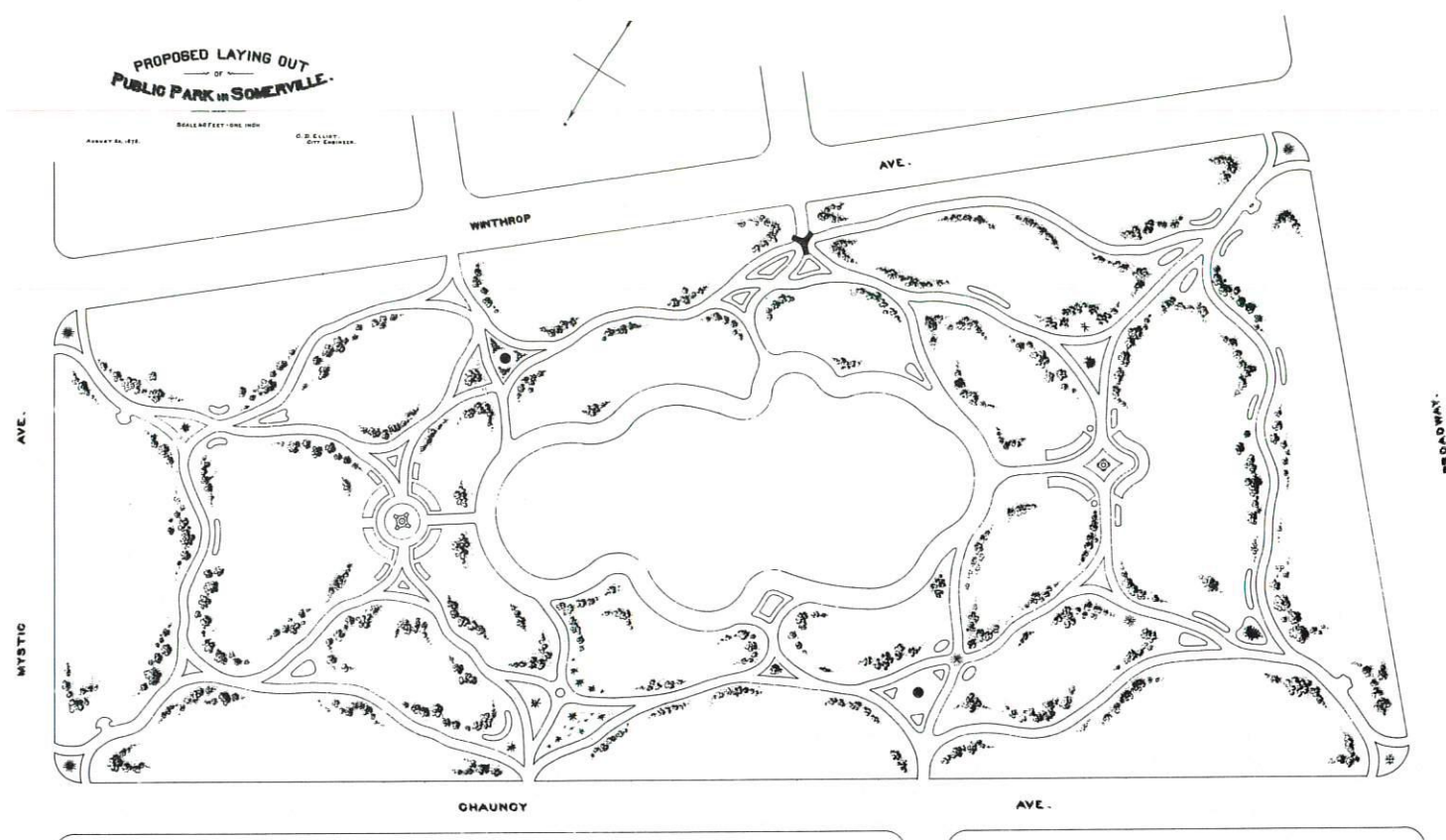
CHARLES W. SAWYER,

244 Washington Street, Boston.

9 CITY SQUARE, CHARLESTOWN,

OR, A. A. PERRY, 291 BROADWAY.

HENRY F. WOODS, ASA P. POTTER,
GEORGE A. BRUCE, RUFUS B. STICKNEY



Plan of Broadway Park. Charles D. Elliot, Engineer, 1872.

In 1870, a public park was proposed for a portion of the Jaques brickyard. The site was bordered by Broadway at the south and yet unplatted, undeveloped land at the east, west and north. Historian Samuels noted that “no other measure in the history of the City has caused such intense feeling and bitter controversy as did the laying out and construction of Broadway Park”. The park construction began July 23, 1872 on marshy land, three feet below the grade established as adequate for sanitation by city engineers, and subsequently required extensive filling. Protest came from several quarters of the city. Residents of north and west Somerville and Ward II objected because the park was not centrally located. (Indeed, an 1892 newspaper article noted that it was used more by residents of Charlestown “than by residents of the Powder House City”.) Surrounding neighbors protested the continued construction of buildings without proper site engineering; real estate speculators, on the other hand, did not want to remove the land from private development. Why the former “Happy Hollow” area was chosen is not known, but it began a tradition of reclaiming undesirable land for public use. Certainly a prime park site would have been the shores of the Mystic, which was still held by the Jaques family. Discussion of public use of Mystic River land did not occur until the late 1890s.

Prior to construction of Broadway Park, the small houses of “Happy Hollow” were moved to Partridge Street, and the park was completed (although the issue eventually resulted in the election of an “anti-park” city administration). The park design was chosen from two submissions. Charles D. Elliot, Somer-

ville’s first City Engineer, prepared the winning plan. The original design shows Elliot’s preference for formal principles of landscape design, rather than the picturesque, naturalistic landscape design then popular. The plan featured two small ponds, two formal garden circles, and symmetrical but curving border paths. The park was officially opened in 1876. Despite the prior public protest, the residential character of Broadway was greatly enhanced by Broadway Park. A companion project of 1874–75 widened Broadway, and created landscaped islands adjacent to the Park. The park was linked to the Metropolitan Park Commission’s Fellsway in 1897, with the construction of the Fellsway at the east edge. As noted in Chapter Two, this improvement was part of a series of proposals which attempted to link the city with the metropolitan network of parks and boulevards. The once tree-lined Fellsway was absorbed by the construction of the McGrath Highway.

In 1917, forty-six acres of the Ten Hills estate were sold to the Bonelli-Adams Corporation for \$300,000. The real estate syndicate announced plans for an amusement park near the Mystic River, with a theater, restaurants, pavilions, and rifle ranges. A residential subdivision was also planned. It was the only portion of the plan to be executed, however. Six east-west streets bisected by Temple Road were platted and two and three family houses constructed after the end of World War I. Shore Drive and a portion of the Mystic River bank were developed as park land by the Metropolitan Park Commission in 1900.

Ten Hills: An Architectural View



35 Temple Street, ca. 1850. This gambrel-roofed, five-bay Colonial house is the oldest building in the Ten Hills area. The house was moved from a site near Marshall Street and Broadway, and reportedly was once used as a blacksmith shop.



52 Main Street, ca. 1866. This mansard-roofed brick house is situated near the Medford-Somerville line. Although the Ten Hills area abounded with brickyards, this is one of only a few found there. The first owner, Benjamin F. Hunt, sold fancy goods in Boston.

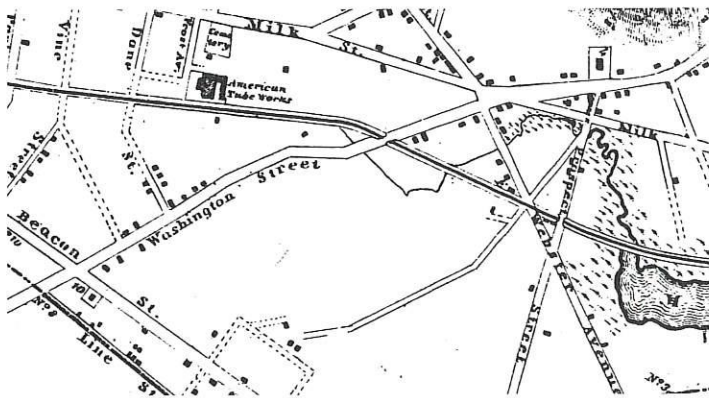


Samuel Littlefield House, ca. 1850. Samuel Littlefield was a brickyard owner and later a grocer. His Greek Revival house was among the larger mid-nineteenth century houses located near the brickyards of Ten Hills.



56 Fellsway West, 1895. This Queen Anne Style cottage which borders Broadway (Foss Park) is one of a few stylish homes built near the park at the end of the century.

Ward II and Cobble Hill



Ward II, 1852. The 1852 Draper Map shows the course of the Miller's River, the early routes of Washington Street (ca. 1630), Beacon Street (1813) and Medford Street (1813). Few residential tracts were yet platted near the factories.

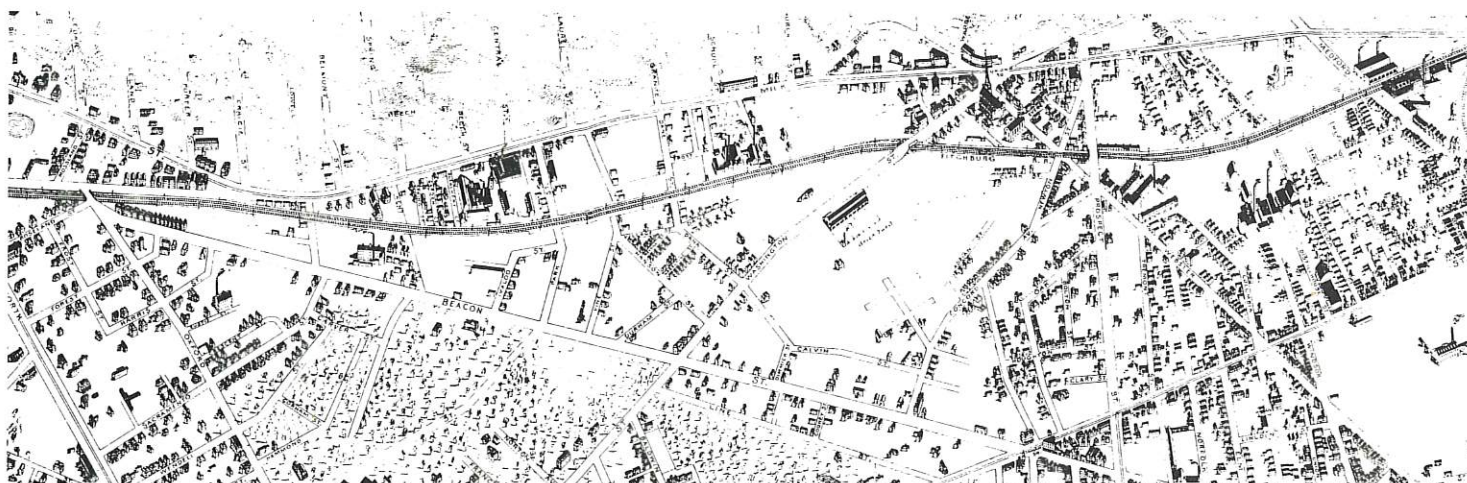
Ward II and Cobble Hill (now the site of an industrial park) were the heart of Somerville's nineteenth century industry. At settlement, much of the area south of Milk Row and Washington Street was a tidal marshland drained by a tributary of the Charles River. This tributary was known as Gibones Creek, Willis' Creek, and later the Miller's River. The marshland extended from the edge of the river near Medford Street, west as far as Webster Avenue, and to the north as far as Milk Row, (now Somerville Avenue). Washington Street, the first route through Somerville, avoided the marshy areas and crossed the western section of Ward II on its route to Harvard Square.

John Wolrich (or Woolrich), the first inhabitant of Charlestown "Beyond the Neck" settled near the corner of Dane and Washington Streets. Although part of Charlestown, the marshy area was excluded from the Stinted Common and was relatively unpopulated until the early nineteenth century. At least two eighteenth century houses still stand in Ward II, although they may have been moved from other locations.

In the early nineteenth century, Ward II grew slowly as a center of transportation and a manufacturing district adjacent to the East Cambridge glassworks and manufacturing district. Road and railroad connections, many of them paid for by Boston and Charlestown entrepreneurs, made the area well-situated for the distribution of goods and materials to Cambridge, Charlestown, and Boston. Webster Avenue was built by investor Royal Makepeace in 1809 to connect with Cambridge Street; Medford Street, connecting with the Craigie Bridge, was constructed in 1813; Beacon Street was built in the same year to connect with Hampshire Street in Cambridge; and the tracks of Fitchburg Railroad were laid in 1836.

Before the Civil War, claypits were dug in at least one Ward II location. The Middlesex Dye and Bleachery Company established in 1801 and the American Tube Works founded in 1852 were among the first large industries. Slaughterhouses were established in the 1850s, a decade which marked the transformation of Somerville from a brickmaking and farming town to a manufacturing and food processing center. By 1872, the year in which Somerville became a city, there were over fifty factories or shops between Medford Street, the Cambridge line, and Somerville Avenue. Metal fabrication, bleaching and dyeing, tanning, lumber processing, slaughtering, distilling and rope-making were among the closely-sited industries.

This concentration of industry and the discharge of attendant pollutants in an area of poorly drained soil brought consequences which affected the character of both the immediate area and the surrounding city for the next century. While the hills north of Milk Row (Somerville Avenue) and Washington Street boasted fine businessmen's homes and attractive commuters' subdivisions, Ward II was filled with stagnant ponds, hundreds of smokestacks, and herds of animals awaiting slaughter.



Map of Ward II, 1879. From 1879 Bird's Eye View of Cambridge.

Prior to the Civil War, Miller's River was relatively pure, and used for fishing and bathing. John Squire's 1850 East Cambridge slaughterhouse was the first to pollute the water; the subsequent construction of Charles North's and other slaughterhouses changed the Miller's River district into a "malodorous and unenviable location." By 1865, the river was the depository for waste from many area industries. In 1869, the city began action to restrict industrial development and fill the river. In 1875, historian Samuel Adams Drake summarized the condition of the river:

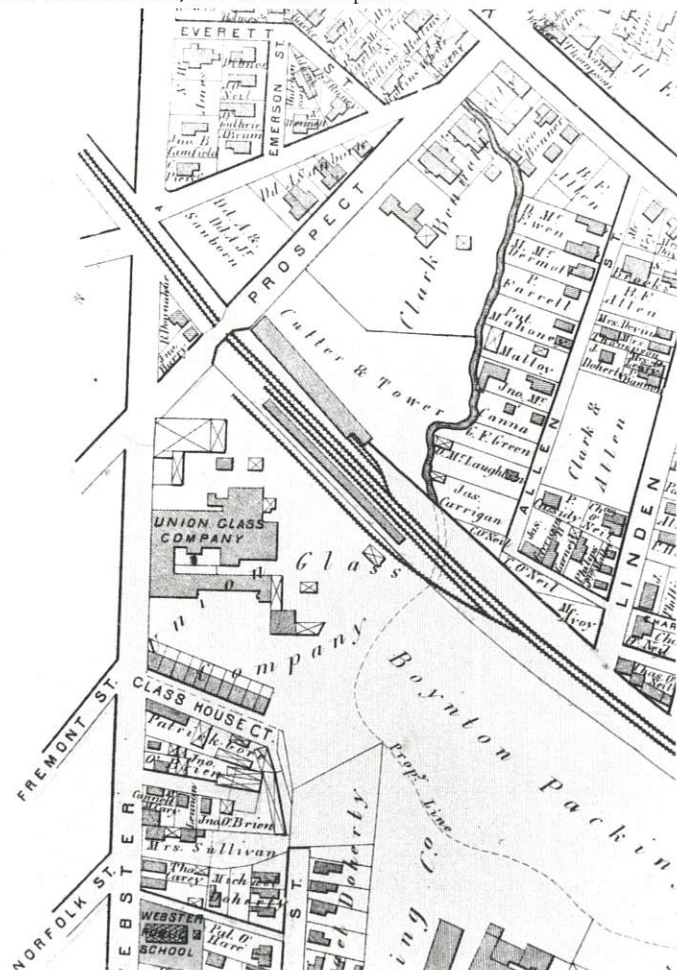
None but the antiquary, who is ready to discard every sense but that of sight, need explore the margin of Miller's River. If he expects to find a placid, inviting stream, with green banks and clumps of willows,—a stream for poetry or meditation,—let him beware. If he looks for a current in which to cast a line, or where he may float in his skiff and dream the day away, building his aerial *chateaux*, let him discard all such ideas and pass by on the other side. Miller's River! faugh! it smells to heaven; not even the Rhine at Cologne could surpass it. Such draughts of air as are wafted to your nostrils from slaughterhouses, where whole hecatombs of squealing victims are daily sacrificed, are not of the chameleon's dish.

Filling of the river was completed by 1876. Nevertheless, the proximity of Ward II's industrial sites, particularly slaughterhouses and rendering plants, to other areas of the city was a political issue well into the twentieth century.

Prior to the post-Civil War industrial development of Ward II, only a handful of houses were built along the main routes of the area: Washington, Beacon, Prospect, Webster and Medford Streets. The later pattern of short, sharply angled streets which characterizes Ward II was determined by the dominance of sprawling industrial sites, the surrounding unsuitable building land which often required filling, and the piecemeal plans of land speculators. Although no factory owners are known to have constructed operant housing, several subdivided open land near their factories for house lots and the construction of workers' houses. Tube Works Court, Glass House Court, and Bleachery Court are among early street names which reflect the original proximity of dwelling to workplace. Although no buildings survive on these courts, maps show that multi-unit frame rowhouses were built along them. A few other worker's subdivisions, however are still intact.

Among the mid-century subdivisions platted by industry owners is the Houghton-Oak-Bolton Street area. In 1854, Amory Houghton, a partner in the Union Glass Works, laid out the first parcel of a small subdivision near Prospect Street.

Atlas of Somerville, 1874. G. M. Hopkins.





Concord Square, 1981.

Small mansard-roofed double houses were among the first buildings in the subdivision, in addition to several tenements. Portions of nearby Dane Street, Dane Avenue and Village Avenue were developed by American Tube Works in a similar fashion.

Housing in Ward II was constructed primarily for area workers, but with the expansion of horse and electric streetcar systems, portions of Beacon Street and surrounding open land were developed for a new market, the Boston commuter. Apartment rows and two and three family houses were the standard housing types for this population. One of the most ambitious developments was Concord Square, developed in the 1880s with well-finished Italianate and Second Empire Style houses. As elsewhere in Ward II, density was high but the convergence of Newton Street and Concord Avenue provided the amenity of a square.

The architectural character of Ward II is more diverse than any section of the city. A few early nineteenth century houses remain that are remnants of large land tracts. Quickly built, gable-roofed frame houses—single, two, and three family—constitute the bulk of housing. Many houses have been moved to their present locations because of changing land use in the area, and the pattern of setback varies from house to house. Long-raized factory sites and claypits have been built over, obscuring the original connection between home and workplace.

Brickmaster George Wyatt's yard was still in use in the 1880s, but after the yard ceased operation the 2½ acre clay pit filled with stagnant water proved to be a health and safety hazard. Several individuals, including Ward II alderman Warren J. Robinson, campaigned for a park on the site. In 1892 Robinson insisted: "I have been at work upon this for at least three, if not more, years, and why? First, to abate a nuisance which to my mind has become a public one, and secondly, to give the residents of Ward II, who are not blessed with elevated sites and extensive gardens, a place where pure air may be found without the cost of harbor tickets." Lincoln Park and Lincoln Parkway was eventually constructed on a portion of the claypit and the surrounding area developed into residential tracts including Magnus Avenue, and Rose and Parkland Streets.

Three-deckers constituted the last major phase of residential development in Ward II. They are of standard stylistic treatment, usually Colonial Revival designs with open balustraded porches. A number are of purely utilitarian design with no decorative exterior trim. The three decker and a variation of the Somerville "court" street plan were combined in Ward II in an attempt to provide a small amount of open space in a high-den-

sity development. Surveyor Dana Perkins' design for Greenwood Terrace and Sanford Terrace off Beacon Street combined a small planted circle with lot plans for eight or more three-family houses.

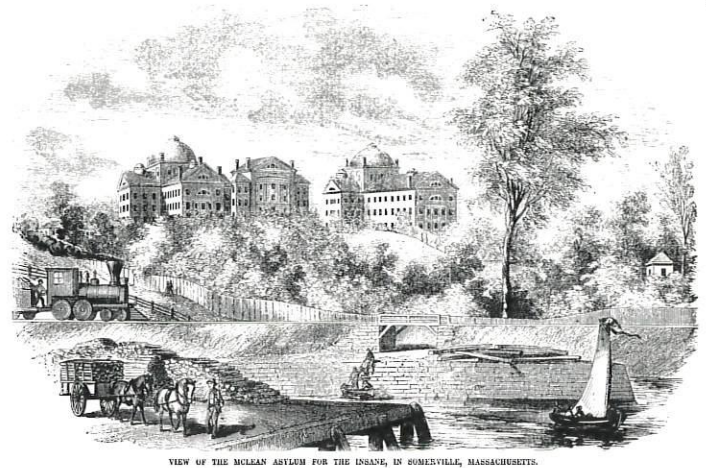
Industrial Park, formerly Cobble Hill, Asylum Hill Brick Bottom, Joy's Farm and Stearnes' Marsh

The area defined as "Industrial Park" on the survey map is bounded by McGrath Highway, Washington Street, and the Cambridge and Boston lines. Today, the Industrial Park contains railyards, landfill, and modern industrial buildings. Few observers would be able to discern the historic importance of the area to Somerville's development by studying the buildings and landforms currently within the Industrial Park area. However, this once-marshy promontory at the mouth of the Miller's River is connected to many important persons and events.

At settlement, the eastern edge of the area was entirely tidal marshland, drained by the Miller's River and the Mill Pond of the Charles River. The higher elevations were dominated by a prominent glacial drumlin, or cobble.

A 1776 fortifications map shows the road to Miller's Hill, the previously-mentioned drumlin. Miller's Hill, also called Cobble Hill, was fortified by General Putnam and Colonel Knox during the siege of Boston. Cobble Hill was within point blank range of the enemy's lines on Bunker Hill, and the post was designed to prevent the enemy's vessels from moving up the river.

In 1792, Joseph Barrell, a wealthy Boston fisheries and shipping merchant, chose the highest elevations of Cobble Hill for his mansion and grounds. Barrell's brick house was designed by Charles Bulfinch and furnished with the first glass made in Boston. Known also as Poplar Grove and Pleasant Hill, the house was reached by an avenue shaded by a double row of elms. Hundreds of trees imported from England were set out on the grounds. A terrace sloped toward the Charles River and offered fine views of Boston. The Barrell estate also boasted a 200 foot-long greenhouse, one of the earliest in Massachusetts. The house was occupied by Barrell until his death in 1804. It passed to Benjamin Joy, Barrell's son-in-law. In 1816, trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital purchased the estate for use as the first insane asylum in New England named for benefactor John McLean. Twenty eight buildings were eventually added to the asylum grounds, including two 76 × 40 foot wings designed by Bulfinch. As additional asylum buildings were constructed, (eventually totalling 16 brick and 12 wooden structures) many of the trees of Barrell's splendid grounds were cut down. Samuel Drake noted in 1874 how dramatically the



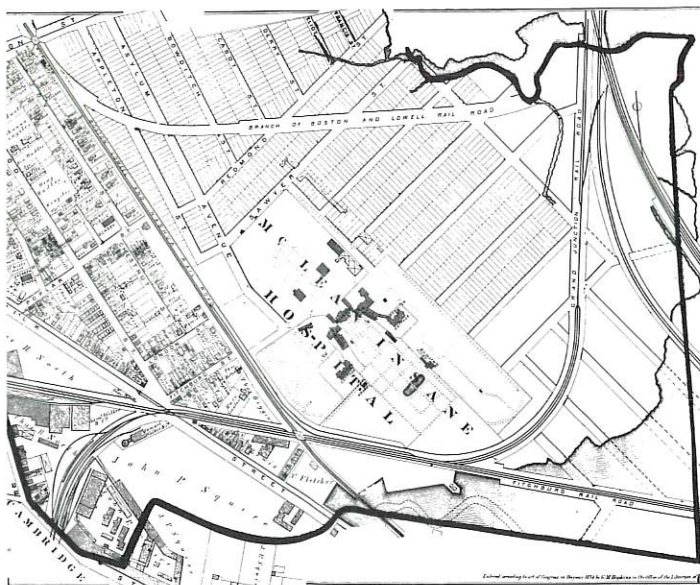
VIEW OF THE MCLEAN ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE, IN SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS.

S.F.N.E.A.

S.F.N.E.A.



Joseph Barrell House, later McLean Asylum. Photograph ca. 1890.



McLean Asylum, 1874. Hundreds of house lots were platted and empty near the Asylum grounds; west of the Asylum, the streets of Brick Bottom were already filled with houses.

site was changing:

... It was remarked that the buildings were first erected to accommodate the trees, and the trees then cut down to accommodate the buildings. ...

The McLean Asylum remained in Somerville until 1896, when the expansion of the Boston and Lowell railroad yards forced its move to Waverley. Railroad construction began in the vicinity of Cobble Hill in 1837, and was accelerated in the 1870s. The **Somerville Journal** anticipated the move over twenty years before the buildings were destroyed:

While the corporation (Asylum) has been building up and beautifying within, the opposite has been going out without. What, with slaughter houses, miasmatic swamps, dirty habitations, and the railroads, the area may be said to be slightly unpleasant even if it not very unhealthy ...

Somerville Journal, 1870

In 1872, the **Journal** predicted the development potential of the area:

... the grounds, from their nearness and convenience to Boston, if laid out in streets and provided with gas and water and proper sewers would be immediately taken up at good prices. We have in their improvement one aid which shall enable us to rid ourselves of the nuisances on the flats of brick bottom and the basins of Miller's River. A good class of residents upon Cobble Hill are sure to extend the hand of improvement over the adjoining flats and by raising them to a proper grade and securing sufficient drainage, change in a few years the whole character of the neighborhood. We want the influence and energy of an intelligent population to push back and finally crowd out entirely the pig pen and rendering establishments which are now rioting in corruption on the adjacent low land. And if the asylum grounds come into the market laid out in streets and building lots we shall very soon have such a population there.

Somerville Journal, March 20, 1872



Somerville Avenue at Poplar Street, 1925. This photograph of "Brick Bottom" was made shortly before the construction of the McGrath Highway.

Somerville Historical Society

After the purchase of the Asylum grounds in 1896 by the Boston and Lowell, the buildings were dismantled over a six-month period. 28 buildings and 2800 trees were cleared from the site. Hundreds of lots had been speculatively platted near the grounds between 1850 and 1890, but only a few streets were built up. Linwood, Chestnut, Joy, and Poplar were platted in 1855 over brickyard land as sites for railroad and factory workers' homes. The four streets formed the center of the area called "Brick Bottom", in reference to the area's clay-filled marshy soil and the nearby brick kilns which "smoked the days and illumined the nights." Frame tenement rows and small cottages were the primary type of house constructed in Brick Bottom.

At the turn of the century, as Somerville's population was rapidly changing, Linwood Street became the center of the Somerville Greek colony. The grocery store at 78 Linwood, owned by Costas Karoyannis, was the address used by many newly-arriving Greeks, and functioned as a "checking-in" point. Greek immigration began in 1902, with John, George, Louis and James Chakalis. The Chakalis brothers emigrated from Kokora, Arcadia.

I was born and brought up in Brick Bottom, right on the spot where the incinerator stands today. In my house we always spoke Greek. Not a word of English was heard. Outside, it was the same. ...

1977 interview quoted in Somerville Planning Office Report

The Somerville Municipal incinerator was built in 1907 near the intersection of Poplar Street and the Northern Artery (McGrath Highway). Cobble Hill was incrementally taken down to fill other marshy sections of the city. Although the scarred hill, with its ribbon of railroads, was finally marked only with a Great Western Union billboard, during World War I the rich top soil provided the site of 50 "Victory Gardens" planted by railroad men. The last portion of the hill was cut away in 1929, and in the 1950s the area was completely cleared for the Somerville Industrial Park.

Ward II and Cobble Hill: An Architectural View



6 Kent Court, ca. 1750. This five-bay, gambrel-roofed Colonial house was moved to its current location from Somerville Avenue. Nearby, Kent Street was an early connector between Beacon Street (1813) and Milk Row. After the Civil War, Kent Court was squeezed between the Reitenbach Brothers Mink Tannery, the Middlesex Bleachery, and the tracks of the Fitchburg Railroad.



72 Dane Street, ca. 1750. Near the route of Washington Street, this three bay house is situated near the intersection where the first resident of Charlestown "beyond the Neck" settled.



Cooper-Davenport Tavern, 81 Eustis Street, 1808. This Federal period building was originally a part of the Cooper-Davenport tavern on Beech Street in Cambridge. This portion of the tavern (an 1808 addition to the original 1757 tavern) was moved to Somerville in 1885. The pedimented entrance with slender pilasters is of note.



336, 338 Beacon Street, ca. 1840. Beacon Street was built in 1813. This pair of houses are among the earliest remaining buildings. 336 is of Greek Revival derivation, with a sidelit entry; 338 has a cusped bargeboard and steeply pitched gables characteristic of the mid-century Gothic Revival style.



26-32 Houghton Street, ca. 1860. Between 1854 and 1859, Amory Houghton, proprietor of the Union Glass Works, platted lots in Ward II for the construction of glassworker's and artisans houses. These mansard rows were among the first buildings in the subdivision.



14 Joy Street, ca. 1855. Joy was one of the first streets platted in the real estate development which occurred around the Asylum grounds and railyards shortly before the Civil War. Although many streets were platted, only a few were ever developed. By 1890, Joy, Linwood, Chestnut, Poplar, London and Fitchburg Streets were filled with closely-built houses and numerous rowhouses intended for laborers. When the area was cleared for an industrial park in the 1950s, this was one of the only houses left standing. This house gives an indication of the appearance of other houses in the area, with a standard plan of 3 bays and a sidelit side entry (with an interesting entrance decorated with punched foliate panels and pendant brackets).



384 Washington Street, ca. 1855. Washington Street near the Cambridge line (and Kirkland Street) was once a corridor of fine homes on spacious lots. This house, owned by jeweler Charles Schuebeler in 1869, has an array of intact original details which surround the twentieth century asphalt siding. Of particular significance is the central oculus surrounded by a carved wooden garland.



George Wyatt House, 33 Beacon, ca. 1868. Pairs of scroll-sawn brackets and unusual dentil courses decorate this Italianate house built for brickyard owner George Wyatt. Wyatt's brickyard, known as "Wyatt's Pit" is now Lincoln Park. Wyatt enjoyed prosperity, as his small but lavishly appointed house indicates. The cast iron fence is one of few remaining in the city.



28-36 Beacon Street, ca. 1880. Built on land formerly owned by brickyard owner George Wyatt, this apartment row has five slate-covered pyramidal roofs, inset brick panels and decorative entrance porches.

George Durrell School, 245 Beacon Street. George Loring, architect. Built in 1894, this red brick with granite trim building was constructed during a period of expansion of Somerville schools.



North Packing Plant, 200 Medford Street, 1879. A cooperage shop, one of the last remaining buildings of the North Packing Plant complex on Medford Street was destroyed by fire in 1981. The building was one of the last large-scale nineteenth century industrial structures still standing in the city.



347-349 Beacon Street, ca. 1880-1884. These Italianate houses were developed by William A. Whitney on land purchased from the Fitchburg Railroad, and were intended for Boston and Cambridge area street-railway and steam-train commuters.

Automobile Repair Garage, 94 Prospect Street, 1917.



Powderhouse



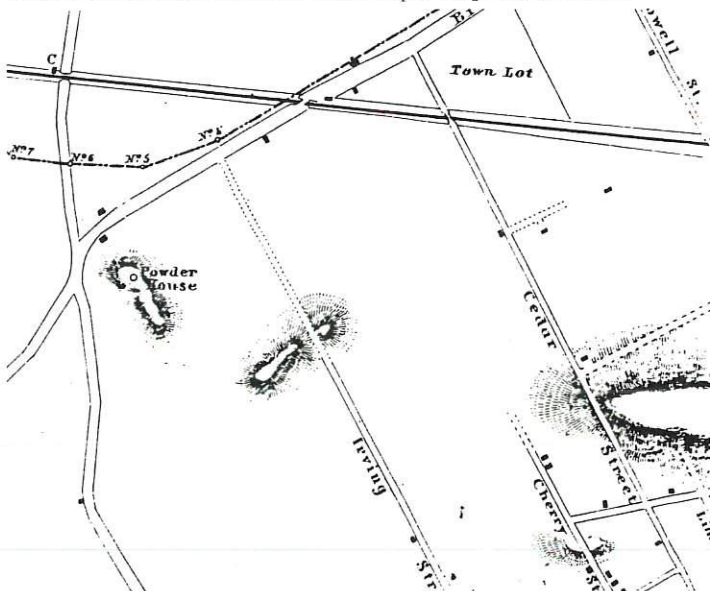
At settlement, the Powderhouse area (situated east of the Powderhouse and bordered by Broadway on the north, College Avenue at the east and the Boston and Lowell Railroad at the south) was a poorly-drained lowland marked by few hills. A rich vein of clay underlay the eastern portion. Although within the "Stinted Common" designated by Charlestown, the area was not as suitable for cattle grazing and farming as the well-drained plain to the west. By 1800, much of the land was owned by members of the Tufts family, who excavated an extensive portion of their property for a brickyard. By 1860, brick kilns, large sheds, and a railroad spur connecting with the Boston and Lowell Railroad were situated on the Tufts Brick Manufacturing Company yards, which extended approximately from Cedar Street to Willow Avenue between Broadway and Morrison Avenue. The construction of the Boston and Lowell Railroad through the northern portion of Somerville (then Charlestown) in 1836 created the necessary transportation link to make the previously isolated claylands a feasible brickyard site. One other large tract was held by the Whipple family whose property extended from Willow Street west to the vicinity of the Powderhouse. Whipple Street was originally a lane leading to the farmhouse, (which has since been moved to Hawthorne Street).

In addition to a few farmers, brickyard and railroad workers were among the earliest residents of the eastern section of the Powderhouse area. In the 1840s and 1850s, a number of small Greek Revival cottages were built near Cedar Street to house laborers. The three-bay gable-roofed cottages have high brick foundations and simple millwork trim. They compare in scale and appearance to the pre-Civil War cottages of North Cambridge brickworkers. It is notable that Asa Murdock, a Cambridge brickyard owner and real estate speculator, owned several tracts of land in the Murdock Street and Clyde Street area off Cedar Street. The simple three bay cottages in Cambridge and Somerville were probably built from the same plans.

Railroad workers were housed on Woodbine Avenue in a group of small, gable-roofed cottages which appear to date from the 1850s. Maps indicate that the houses were moved to Woodbine Avenue in the 1870s, shortly after the Lexington and Arlington Branch Railroad joined the Boston and Lowell at Somerville Junction. The remaining brickyard and railroad workers' houses of the Powderhouse area are modest reminders of two significant industrial features of Somerville's nineteenth century development: the railroad and the brickyard.

Roads and streets were built gradually through the Powderhouse area, with the emphasis on industry rather than residential speculation. Highland Avenue, at the southern edge, was extended from Central Street to Davis Square in 1870 to merge with the other transportation facilities, including horse-car and passenger train lines, at Davis Square. At the northern

Powderhouse Area. From the 1852 Draper Map of Somerville.



edge, Broadway near the old "Willow Bridge" was lined with a few houses and taverns, the Medford Cattle Market just across the line, and the Emerson Pickle Factory near the Powderhouse on Quarry Hill. The sheds, kilns, and clay beds of the Tufts Brick Manufacturing Company dominated the landscape, however. Not until the late 1870s, with the decline of the Somerville brick trade and the popularity of the Lexington and Arlington line, did the claylands become a prime site for residential development.

Despite an economic depression which began in 1873, Samuel Wolcott platted 482 lots on 50 acres of former brickyard land between the Willow Avenue and Cedar Street passenger stations of the Lexington and Arlington Branch. The lot sizes indicate that the developer intended that the tract be built with small, closely sited homes. The plan, showing eight streets laid out between Boston, Cedar, Willow, and Morrison, was changed several times over the next 25 years before any houses were constructed. In 1891, Somerville engineer Charles D. Elliot proposed a landscaped boulevard along present-day Kidder Avenue. The boulevard was to be flanked by a two-block landscaped park named for landowner John Ayer. As finally constructed by a third investor Wilbur Rice in 1901, the brickyard subdivision contained 500 lots, with a central street called Highland Road. This 80' wide street featured a 10' landscaped boulevard. The two-block park was sacrificed. As was often the case in Somerville's subdivision practice, early landscaping schemes were compromised before construction began. However, 600 shade trees were planted in the subdivision. Rice filled the subdivision with one and two family houses which sold for approximately \$4200. Gambrel roofs and Colonial motifs were the standard architectural treatment. "Somerville Highlands," as the subdivision was called, was convenient to the handsome granite passenger rail station built in 1888 near Lexington Avenue and Hancock Street, also called the Somerville Highlands station. This station replaced the Willow and Cedar Stations, and was in operation until 1926.

Another large residential subdivision near the Powderhouse was platted by Nathan and Francis Tufts in 1891. Called Powderhouse Farm, six streets were platted on the backslope of Quarry Hill on land that Nathan Tufts' father acquired in 1836. Powderhouse Terrace, Mallet Street, and Bay State Avenue were among the streets of the tract. Two family houses with gambrel roofs were the standard house type, but a few fine single family houses built by contractor Z.E. Cliff were also constructed.



Tufts Brickyard Subdivisions, ca. 1884.



Ayer Park Plan, 1891. Charles Elliot, engineer-designer.



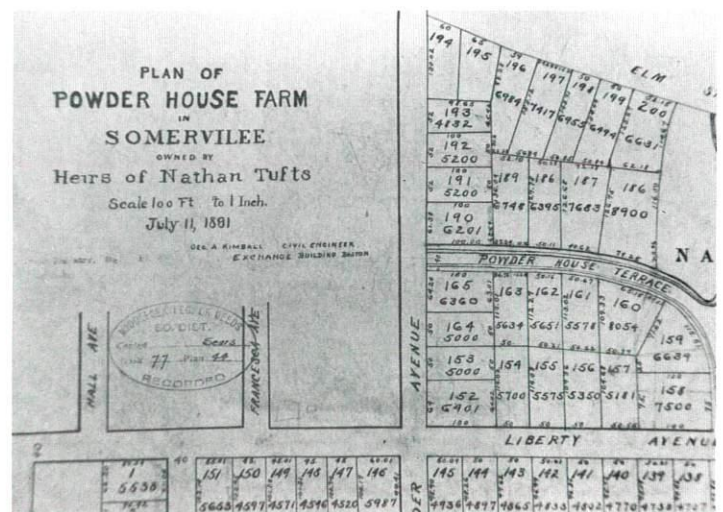
Somerville Highlands Station, 1888.

While the western section of Powderhouse was affected by the post Civil War growth of Davis Square, the eastern section grew more slowly. One large marshy tract, known as "Polly Swamp" provided a few home sites as early as 1850. Albion Street, near the Central Street rangeway, had a collection of Italianate businessmen's homes built on land formerly a part of the Stearnes farm. Nothing was built on the marshes or surrounding woodlands until the 1890s, when William Stearnes sold off lots on Hudson, Alpine, and Albion Streets. Mansard cottages and two family Queen Anne houses with simple trim were the standard house types chosen by builders, but a few outstanding Queen Anne houses were built near the intersection of Hudson Street and Benton Road. The 1898 Appalachian Mountain Club Guide titled **Walks and Rides in the Country Round About Boston** visited this densely built area and noted that Polly Swamp was "once covered with small trees and thick bushes, a gruesome place shunned o' nights because "haunted" but now packed with houses and treeless, not one preserved for shade or street ornament."



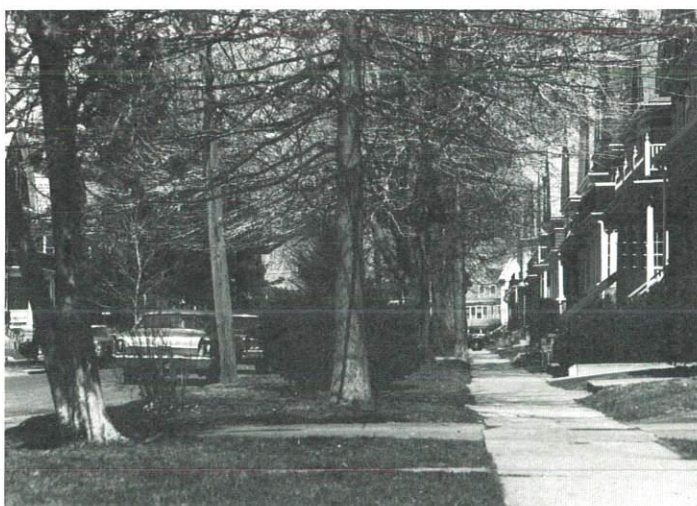
Somerville Historical Society

Construction of Powderhouse Terrace, 1899. Slate ledges were blasted to build Powderhouse Terrace as part of the Powderhouse Farm subdivision.



Powderhouse Farm Advertisement, 1896.

Highland Road. 1981.



Highland Road and its Boulevard: 1909

In 1916, Highland Road residents successfully petitioned the city for permission to build garages on their property. This necessitated cutting into the boulevard for driveways. Other residents, who wished to see the boulevard remain intact, opposed the petition. The **Somerville Journal** of January 28, 1916 reported one of the opponent's reactions:

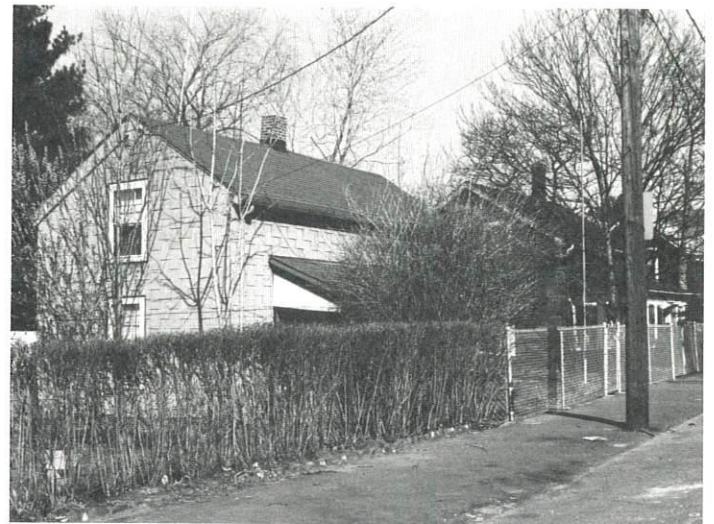
Mrs. Frank Hartwell (61 Highland Road) said she had looked all over Dorchester and various sections of Somerville before settling on Highland Road, and she paid \$300 more for her house for the reason that she was in love with the road. . .

Flower gardens were planted by many residents on the boulevard, a practice which was continued for several decades.

Powderhouse: An Architectural View



Stearnes House, Hudson and Cedar Streets, ca. 1800. Near the Cedar Street rangeway, this former farmhouse is one of few built near "Polly Swamp", and is the earliest dwelling still standing in the Powderhouse area.



Woodbine Avenue, ca. 1850–70. Railroad worker's houses originally had two-room plans.



Frank Williams House, 37 Albion Street, ca. 1860. Albion Street (originally Forest Street) near Central Street has a row of Italianate houses built by businessmen in the 1850s. Frank Williams was a Boston kitchen furnishings dealer. 37 Albion retains its distinctive trefoil windows in the front gable, and an ornate porch and window enframement.

Z. E. Cliff House, 29 Powderhouse Terrace, 1900. One of the best remaining examples of the Shingle Style in Somerville, this builder (and mayor's) house has a broad gambrel roof and mullioned Palladian window.

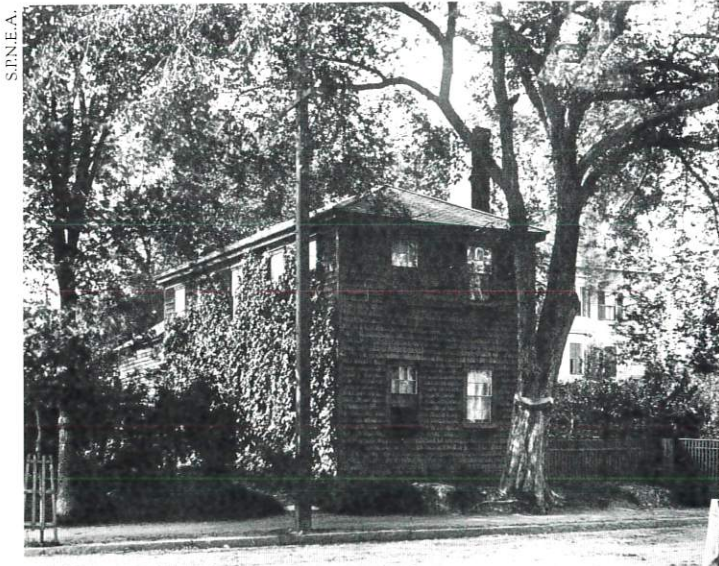


Wilbur Rice House, 46 Willow, ca. 1891. Willow Avenue was one of the original rangeways of the Stinted Common. The John Whipple farm was situated along the rangeway, then called "The Lane." The Whipple farmhouse has since been moved to Hawthorne Street. In the 1890s, Wilbur Rice built this Queen Anne Style house with a corner turret and mansard roof. Rice was the developer of "Somerville Highlands," 150 houses on Spring Hill, and 75 houses on Wyatt Street in Ward II.

783 Broadway, ca. 1905. Gambrel roofs and Colonial Revival motifs were favored by many Powderhouse area builders.



Davis Square



Hall House, ca. 1800, College Avenue. Formerly on the site of the West Somerville Branch Library.

Russell House, 25 Russell Street, ca. 1845. Philemon Russell, a West Somerville farmer, owned 50 acres of land in the vicinity of Russell Street. He subdivided a section for house lots in 1845, including Orchard, Russell and Cottage Place.



Davis Square (at the intersection of Holland Street, Highland Avenue, Elm Street, College Avenue and the Lexington and Arlington Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad) grew rapidly as a residential and commercial area after the Civil War. Davis Square became recognized as the center of trade in the general area once known as "West Somerville," encompassing the western section of the city.

In the eighteenth century, before the western section of Somerville (now including the Tufts, Powderhouse, and West Somerville areas) developed with large tracts of one and two family houses, only Elm Street, a continuation of Milk Row or Somerville Avenue, ran near the location of present-day Davis Square. Elm connected to the town of Medford and brought traders and farmers from the northern markets. West of the Square, Beech Street was the early seventeenth century connector between the Great Road (Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge) and Elm. A small group of taverns, shops and houses were situated near the intersection of Elm and Beech Streets before the Revolutionary War. North and west of the present-day square, only one early house is documented, the Hall House (ca. 1800), formerly located on College Avenue.

Davis Square developed as a commercial and residential area after the extension of streets and steam rail lines to the western section of Somerville, and as a result of the growth of nearby Porter Square and Massachusetts Avenue near the Cambridge-Somerville line. Porter Square was the site of the Porter's Hotel (1831-33) and the North Cambridge (later Porter) Cattle Market which was in operation between the 1840s and 1867. Porter Square was also the site of the Cambridge Station of the Fitchburg Railroad, which began passenger service to Boston in 1843. Several residential subdivisions followed the introduction of the railroad. In 1844, opposite the train station, Artemas White laid out Cottage Street, straddling the Cambridge-Somerville line. On the Somerville side of the street, only two houses were built immediately. In the next year, surveyor John Low of Chelsea laid out Orchard Street for Captain Gilman Sargent; this development also straddled the Cambridge-Somerville line. Sixty lots, with deed restriction, were provided. The Sargent development was on land formerly used as an apple orchard by Philemon Robbins Russell, a Somerville farmer whose main land holdings were north of Broadway. In 1847, George Meacham, a partner in the Porter Cattle Market, planned a 43-lot subdivision straddling the Cambridge line. Meacham and Dover Streets were the main streets of the plat, but none were built up until after the Civil War, a characteristic of the early subdivision of the Davis-Porter Square area.

In 1855, C.W. Kingsley, Cambridge Water Commissioner, laid out a subdivision of large lots near Chester Street and Orchard Street. Characteristically, Kingsley and other area developers were Cambridge residents; Somerville land dealers



apparently did not become active in Davis Square real estate until after the Civil War. The Day estate, adjoining Massachusetts Avenue, was subdivided in 1867, and lots again sold with deed restrictions, a practice not yet generally established elsewhere in Somerville.

In 1856–7, a horse railway was laid on Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square to Arlington, and provided service for the Davis Square area. In 1858, two lines of horse railroads were built in Somerville, one over Broadway to Winter Hill and one up Washington Street to Union Square. The Somerville Horse Railroad Company extended its tracks to West Somerville from Union Square in 1863, along Somerville Avenue and Elm Street. Public streets were improved in the 1860s, first with the widening of Elm Street (later renamed College Avenue north of Highland Avenue) and with the construction of Holland Street in 1867, and Highland Avenue and Summer Street in 1870. In 1870–1, the Lexington and Arlington Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad reached Davis Square, providing the most convenient transportation to date and opening the area to full-scale development. Several industries subsequently located in Davis Square, notably the Sprague and Hathaway Picture Frame Company which built the 1874 Clarendon Block, the Square's first major business block and brick structure. By 1880, a substantial collection of commercial buildings housed the area's many realtors, insurance agents, stores and shops.

Commercial expansion encroached on one of the area's large estates. Much of the site of present-day Davis Square was a portion of the 10-acre estate of Person Davis (1819–1894). Davis, a grain dealer of the Boston firm Davis and Taylor, moved to Somerville in 1850 and built a house on his land near the intersection of Elm, Grove, and Morrison Streets. Rand's Woods, behind his property and extending to Willow Avenue, was a popular picnicking spot and "resort for enthusi-



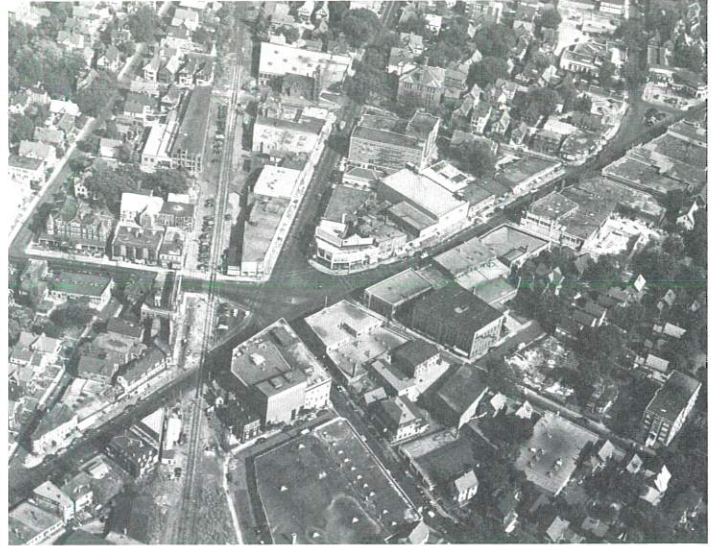
Davis Square, ca. 1910. The 1888 Medina Block was a Davis Square landmark until a fire destroyed all but one bay of the building on the Elm Street side.

Davis Square, 1982.



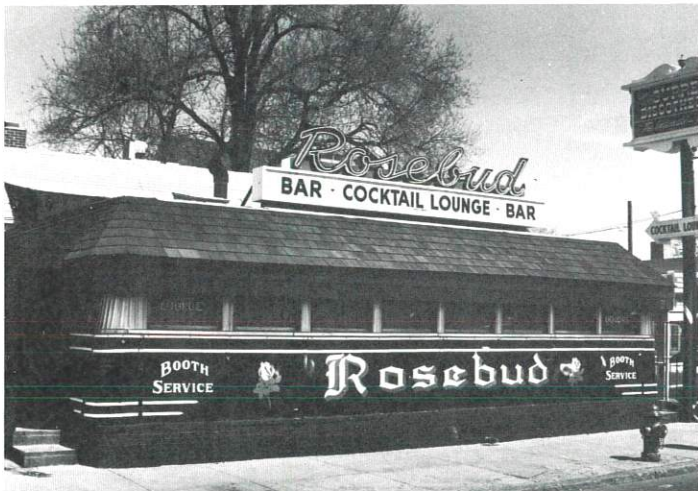
Somerville Historical Society

Woodbridge Hotel, College Avenue, photograph ca. 1900. The Shingle Style Woodbridge was a well-known Davis Square hotel and restaurant at the turn of the century. Razed.



Somerville Historical Society

Davis Square, 1950. The Woodbridge Hotel, Highland School and Davis Square firehouse are among now-razed structures visible in this aerial view.



Rosebud Diner, 381 Summer Street, ca. 1935.

Walker Garage, 88 Winslow Avenue, 1911. Andrew Walker constructed this brick and terra cotta automobile repair garage in 1911. The two story garage has a high stepped parapet with 17 courses of ornamental terra cotta cornice tile. Today, the garage serves as a sculptor's studio.



asts in botany" according to a writer in 1906. The 1870-1 Lexington and Arlington Branch Railroad was laid out across Davis' land. (The Italianate house built by Davis in 1850 was razed in 1926.) In 1883, the Somerville City Council officially designated the area "Davis Square," after Person Davis. In the 1920s, however, Davis Square businessmen's groups unsuccessfully lobbied to change the name to "Middlesex Square," reflecting the commercial orientation towards a regional rather than local market.

In the 1880s and 1890s, residential property in the Square was marketed primarily to commuters employed in Boston. Beginning with the modest houses built in the 1880s by Ira Hill (who also was responsible for Union Square development) on Winslow, Villa, Park and Chandler Streets, and ending with Henry Glover's development of Campbell Park in the 1890s near the Union Horse Rail Line's Car barns, most developments were intended for daily users of the horsecar and steam rail lines which intersected Davis Square.

Davis Square remained an active trade and transportation center through the twenties and thirties, when public transit decreased and automobile commuting became popular. The commercial investment in the area between World War I and II is evident in the 1933 Art Deco Somerset Bank, a large structure which originally combined banking facilities for three institutions. The Rosebud and the recently-razed Pine Tree diners are among other additions of the 1930s.

Many modern buildings replaced older commercial structures. Among turn of the century landmarks was the E.S. Sparrow Hardware Store building of 1874, at Highland and College Avenue, which served as an unofficial meeting place for the West Somerville Board of Trade and other local groups. This building was torn down in 1935 for the construction of a glass block and terra cotta furniture store, then the Square's most modern building. The 1920s and 1930s saw the construction of several new retail blocks. In 1926, the Square's oldest brick building, the Clarendon Block, was torn down for the dry goods firm of Park, Snow and Company. Such development was encouraged by the West Somerville Board of Trade and two Davis Square merchants' associations, formed in 1912 and 1924.

Davis Square: An Architectural View



28-30 White Street, ca. 1844. Brookline housewright Joshua Fernald built a group of Gothic Revival houses at the Cambridge-Somerville line for real estate dealer Artemas White.



Photograph 1989.

93 Dover Street, ca. 1860. This small brick cottage near Davis Square is the only one of its kind in Somerville.

Photograph 1989.



197 Morrison Avenue, ca. 1870. Half-hidden on a steep ridge, this brick house is one of Somerville's best examples of the picturesque Gothic Revival Style. Of note are the cusped bargeboards and a pointed lancet window in the gable end.

Photograph 1989.





34 Day Street, 1870. Mansard cottages were a popular choice of builders in the Davis Square area. Built at reasonable cost, this house has many intact original details including a bracketed cornice.



30 Day Street, ca. 1870. Patterned slates are an intact feature of this mansard-roofed house near Davis Square.

24 Chester Street, ca. 1858. This early Davis Square area house retains wide, grooved cornerboards which are part of the original Italianate design.



26 Chester Street, ca. 1878. A slate-covered mansard roof is an original feature of the Second Empire treatment of this three-story house.





Clifton Bacon House, 27 Chester Street, ca. 1885. One of the most elaborate houses in the Chester Kingsley subdivision, the Bacon house has a variety of carved and shingled treatments at the gable end. Bacon was a Boston coal dealer.



Campbell Park, ca. 1890–1900. Campbell Park, in the subdivision known as Campbell Park, is representative of building types and Queen Anne architectural styles found in many late nineteenth century Somerville subdivisions. Campbell Park was considered a suburban neighborhood by its many early residents who worked in Boston and used the trains and streetcars which stopped at Davis Square stations.



27 Meacham Road, 1890. At the edge of Campbell Park, this Queen Anne house was possibly the “show” house of the subdivision built by Henry Glover.

West Somerville and Tufts

Let anyone complain of the low marshes and clay pits of Somerville but to go to the summit of College Hill and look around him and he can ask for no more of a paradise than he sees spread out at his feet.

Somerville Journal, March 16, 1872

The land in the West Somerville and Tufts area, west of the Powderhouse (at the intersection of College Avenue, Broadway, and Powderhouse Boulevard) was relatively undeveloped until the last decade of the nineteenth century. Prior to the construction of electric streetcar tracks beyond Davis and Teele Squares in the 1890s, much of the area was devoted to farming, fishing, and quarrying. Well-situated between Alewife Brook, (the Menotomy River, the principal tributary of the upper Mystic) and the second division of Charlestown's Stinted Common, the land west of the Powderhouse was still described as an "unholy wilderness" at the time Somerville separated from Charlestown in 1842.

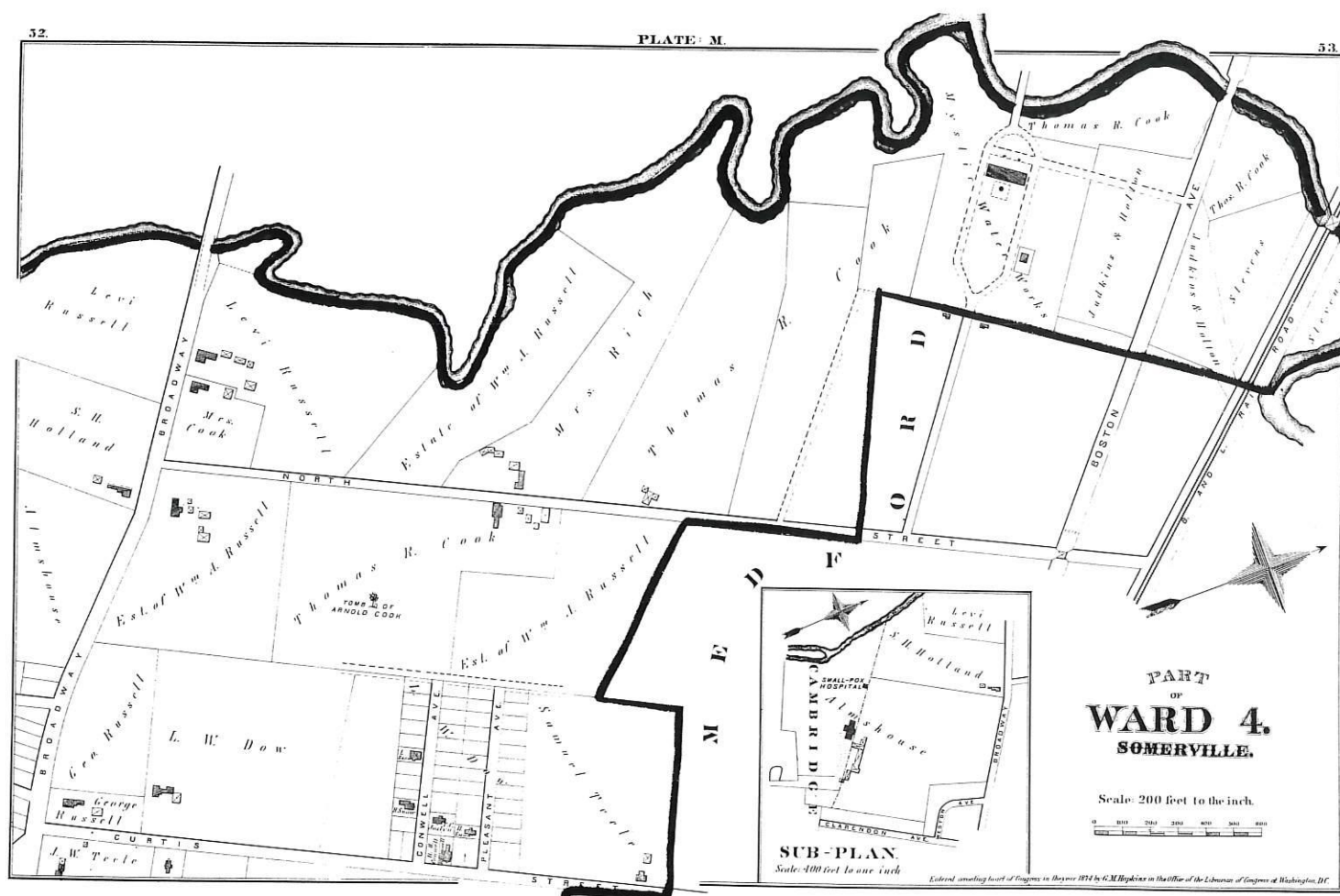
At settlement, this western end of Somerville was a grassy plain, broken by a few marshy areas and outcroppings of bedrock. Walnut Tree or College Hill (now the Tufts University campus) and Quarry Hill (a slate filled ledge, now the Tufts Park) were the principal elevations. In addition to the Medford diabase obtained from the ledge at Quarry Hill, two sand and gravel quarries were developed in the vicinity of Simpson Avenue and on Clarendon Hill near Weston Avenue.

Today, street and place names reflect the agricultural history of the area. Early settlers included members of the Tufts and Russell families, to whom eighteenth century land and farms can be traced. The Teele, Holden, Dow, Cook, and Simpson families had nineteenth century farms. Several early writers recall that the roads or rangeways which ran north of Broadway (corresponding to North, Curtis, and Packard Streets) were used only "for getting to the farming land beyond," and were often enclosed by private fences.

An idea of the character of a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century farm was provided by a daughter of an early resident. Susanna Russell Cook, the daughter of Philemon Robbins Russell, who owned 125 acres of land near Broadway and North Streets, wrote in 1910 that the old Russell farm was comprised of "80 acres of upland, 40 acres of woodland, and 5 acres of marshland." The marshland was in the vicinity of Alewife Brook. The old Russell House, built ca. 1750, served as a tavern for the many farmers from the "back country" who travelled to market in Boston and Charlestown via Broadway. Fifty acres of the Russell farm were located between Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, Broadway, and Newbury and Paulina Streets. This portion was purchased from Thomas Russell of Boston (not a relative) in 1796. Susanna Russell Cook wrote that her father planted a "great apple orchard" on this tract which proved to be very productive. Philemon Russell was able to ship apples from his West Somerville orchard to New Orleans, the first lot sent there from Boston area orchards. Each apple was wrapped in tissue paper by the Russells for the 1500 mile journey.

Russell House, also known as Russell Tavern, ca. 1800. Photograph ca. 1880. Situated on Broadway near North Street, near the present-day Barton Street, this was the first of several Russell family farmhouses. Notable features of this house were slender pilasters and leaded Federal-period fanlight at the main entrance. Razed.





1874 G.M. Hopkins Atlas

Another branch of the Russell family was occupied with fishing at Alewife Brook. The descendants of James Russell laid their nets for alewives which were taken to the Boston wharves and sold to the cod and haddock fishermen as bait. Alewives were also salted and shipped to the West Indies as food for plantation workers in return for molasses brought to the Medford rum distilleries.

Adjoining the orchards of the Philemon Russell property was a 50-acre military camp known as Camp Day or Camp Cameron, in the vicinity of Cameron Street and straddling the Cambridge/Somerville line. Prior to the Civil War, annual musters were held at the camp, and it was used during the Civil War. Portions of Cameron and Elmwood Streets were laid out in 1870 across the former camp site. In 1896 H.T. Townsend of Somerville and A.M. Hicks of Cambridge purchased 72 lots from Camp Cameron Associates, a real estate syndicate. They developed several streets named after famous battlefields, including Glendale, Seven Pines and Yorktown.

After the Civil War, the construction of new streets or improvement of existing streets, including Holland Street (built in 1867 between Teele and Davis Squares) and College Avenue (formerly Elm) and extension of railway lines gave great impetus to the development of real estate. In 1870, the Lexington and Arlington Branch Railroad, running through Davis Square, was connected with the Boston and Lowell Railroad at Somerville Junction near Lowell Street, and trains began running near a previously isolated section of West Somerville. West Somerville grew rapidly between 1880 and 1890, as stores, homes, churches, and schools were constructed where previously there were less than six farmhouses surrounded by open fields.

Alewife Brook. Demarcating the Somerville-Arlington border, the shores of Alewife Brook (also known as the Menotomy River) were the site of fishnets or weirs placed by early Charlestown settlers to catch alewives.





Russell Farm and Irving Russell House, Broadway at North Street. Photograph ca. 1905. The buildings of the farm (ca. 1820) and the Irving Russell House (1895) were later used as the Somerville City Hospital.

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F. A. TEELE,

Davis Sq., W. Somerville.

With the opening of the area in the 1870s, many farmers or their heirs divided agricultural land into residential tracts. As was the case in other sections of the city, lot subdivision often preceded the actual construction of houses by a decade or more as real estate and homebuilding was affected by various recessions and financial panics. Among the largest residential subdivisions in the Tufts and West Somerville area were those of farmers William Russell, Lorenzo Dow, and Jesse Simpson. Prospect Hill resident Ira Hill, however, was one of the earliest speculators in the area, developing portions of Wallace and Chandler Streets and Park Avenue in 1870. Apparently Hill's subdivision was intended for workers, and was adjacent to the light manufacturing industries of Davis Square and Porter Square. In 1896, the area was criticized by the Heptorean Club for setting a poor standard of housing construction and landscape design:

... Wallace Street was suddenly built very much as it is today, many small houses set closely together in the midst of the open country. This street seemed to give the keynote to the style of architecture in that part of the city for many years. If the people had built on larger lots at that time, it would have added much to the appearance of that part of the city.

Despite such criticism, a number of large single family houses on relatively spacious lots were built along College Avenue and in the William Russell subdivision developed in the 1890s. The stylish houses evidence a decidedly suburban architectural quality in contrast to the earlier rows of workers' houses on Wallace Street and the uniform rows of two family houses built between 1895 and 1905 on the farm and quarry property of Jesse Simpson.

Teele Square, at the edge of Clarendon Hill and near the 1836 homestead of Jonathan Teele, developed as a small commercial center after the turn of the century. When Holland Street was constructed from Davis Square to Broadway in 1867, Teele Square was a wide spot in the road, and remained as such until early twentieth century construction of stores and shops to serve the compact streetcar suburb of the West Somerville and Tufts area. Churches, schools, and railway facilities appeared before commercial building, however. A small chapel for the St. James Episcopal Church was built on Newbury Street, near Teele Square, in 1876, and a substantial edifice

constructed in 1880. In 1885, the four room Lincoln School was built near the intersection of Broadway and Holland. By 1885, a few houses appeared on the streets platted across the old Philemon Russell orchard, and the Camp Cameron land, including Carmel, Moore, Newbury, and Clarendon Streets. The West End Street Railway Company Carshop was built near Alewife Brook and Broadway, anticipating the imminent development of a commuter area. By the turn of the century, the agricultural character of Somerville's last large farming tract slipped away as a portion of the Philemon Russell farm was purchased by the city for the City Hospital. A small man-made lake on Tufts College property was filled, and farmers turned to the sale of real estate. The biography of Silas Holland, for whom Holland Avenue is named, provides insight in to the dual career of long-time Teele Square residents at the turn of the century:

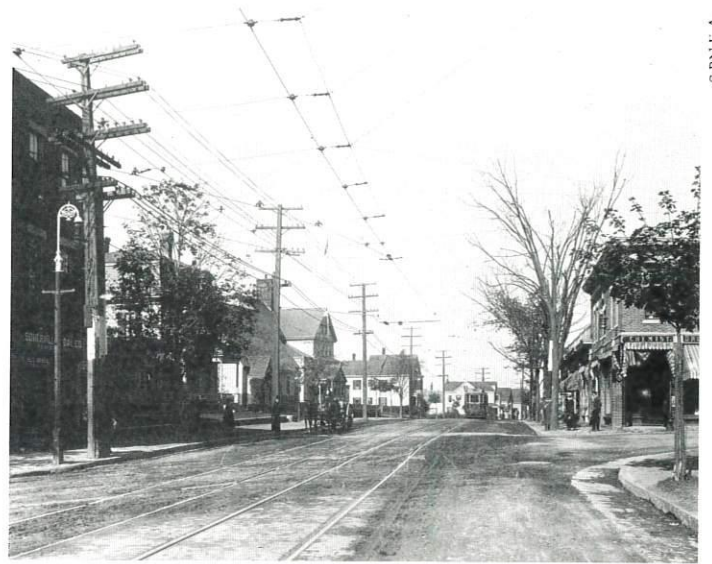
... Silas Harvey Holland was born in Boston in 1814, the son of Samuel and Martha (Rogers) Holland. His father was an English sea captain and was lost at sea. The greater part of the young man's early life was spent in the towns of Marlboro and Northboro where in the latter town he learned the carriage makers trade . . . Mr. Holland came to Somerville in 1856 and bought the farm owned by Thomas Teele, on Broadway, where he engaged in market gardening and fruit raising for thirty-five years. He has also been a dealer in real estate in this city and Cambridge. He served on the board of Selectmen for the town of Somerville four years, and at the present time is one of the trustees of the Somerville Savings Bank. . . .

Samuels, Somerville Past and Present, 1897

The **Somerville Journal** described one of Holland's real estate ventures in 1896:

House lots are now scarce where farms were plenty 10 years ago in the most thriving sections of Somerville. Prices for large tracts here are so greatly advanced that real estate dealers hesitate to take them in hand. A notable exception is the Holland Estate at Clarendon Hill. This is located close to the new terminus of the West End Railway, and looks across the valley to the beautiful Arlington Heights, the view of which can never be obstructed. The estate consists of some 11 acres of rich loamy soil, high and dry, well adapted for building purposes and now surveyed and laid out by one of the best landscape architects in the country. It is being sold in lots subject to such restrictions as will guarantee a constantly increasing value and a permanency of natural beauty. . . .

Alderman and later Mayor Zebedee E. Cliff (1864–1934) was among the most active of the builders in West Somerville. Cliff was a carpenter-turned-developer who built many of the city's two family houses as well as some of the finest single-family family houses. Powderhouse Terrace, Ossippee and Whitfield Roads were among his residential developments. In 1925, he developed the first large "modern" apartment building in West Somerville, the 42-suite "Bryant Chambers" at College and Park Avenues. The Bryant Chambers included commercial space at ground level for two stores. Cliff also built several commercial buildings in Teele Square, including the 1905 Cliff Building at Broadway and Curtis Street. By the time of his death in 1934, he was credited with over two million dollars worth of construction in Somerville, much of it in the western section of the city.



Teele Square, photograph ca. 1905.

Cliff Building, Teele Square, 1905.





Capen House, 8 Professor's Row. This slate-roofed mansard house is among the row of nineteenth century faculty housing built after the establishment of Tufts College in 1853.

Powderhouse Boulevard Houses, ca. 1905–1910.



Tufts College

Tufts College was founded as a Universalist College in 1852 on Walnut Hill, on land donated by Charles Tufts of Somerville and Timothy Cotting of Medford. Although the first college buildings, including Ballou Hall (1853) were situated in Medford, other college buildings were constructed on the Somerville portion of the campus site. Professors Row, traditionally a street of faculty houses and student organizations, had at least four houses in 1859. The Tufts campus, with its large tract of land on Walnut (or College) Hill, helped to preserve the open space of the area, and the development of the campus did not immediately spur residential development. Small farms, in fact, were still being established by market gardeners such as Simon Holden and Lorenzo Dow near the Tufts campus in the 1850s and 1860s, and the streets surrounding the campus to the west and northwest were developed primarily after the turn of the century.

In 1892, to the south of the campus, Powderhouse Boulevard was proposed as part of a successful lobby by Somerville residents and elected officials to connect Somerville to the Metropolitan Park Commission's Mystic Valley Parkway. Stretching between the Powderhouse and Alewife Brook, the Boulevard project was supported by the city officials who saw a new opportunity:

a good block, with suitably laid out intersecting streets would determine the future of that section, and increase the valuation, adding a class of houses which would tend to lower the burdens of taxation and municipal expenditure. Such a boulevard would prevent a repetition of the mistakes made in the haphazard development and consequent deterioration of some older sections of the city. . . .

Annual Reports, 1898

The subsequent one and two family houses built on the Boulevard appealed primarily to Boston and Somerville businessmen, who used the increasingly efficient street railway system. The original plan for a high-quality residential section, however was compromised by the construction of a number of three-deckers. The June 7, 1912 **Somerville Journal** reported on the reaction of investors and residents:

Property owners and residents of Powderhouse Boulevard who until recently imagined that the building ordinances in force in this city restricted building operations of the boulevard to one and two family houses were unpleasantly surprised by the erection of three-flats or three deckers. . . .

The development of the Boulevard came at a time when the City of Somerville was struggling with ordinances aimed at restricting the construction of three-family houses on small lots. The restrictions placed on the Powderhouse Boulevard property called for no building more than three stories, which effectively allowed the undesired three-deckers.

West Somerville and Tufts: An Architectural View



Lorenzo Dow House, 13 Fairmount Street, 1848. Lorenzo Dow, like Silas Holland, is representative of the mid-nineteenth century farmer-realtor of West Somerville. Dow's Italianate farmhouse was at the center of his acreage, which produced potatoes and market garden crops. In 1850, Dow's 11 acre field produced market garden crops valued at \$800, and a potato crop valued at \$200. Neighbor Samuel Teele produced \$1000 and \$200, respectively. Dow's land was subdivided forouselots, including portions of Fairmount, Ware, and Dow Streets.



Simon Holden House, 97 Curtis Street, 1863. Another survivor of the early Curtis Street rangeway, this Greek Revival house was built by a market gardener. Another Greek Revival farmhouse is located at 21 College Hill Road, where it was moved from its original North Street site.



53 Moore Street, ca. 1870. This dwelling is among a collection of early mansard-roofed houses on Clarendon Hill. It was first the home of railroad workers Robert J. and George C. Melville, and later Granville M. Edwards, a blacksmith.



17, 19 Summit Street, ca. 1895.





Charles H. Lockhardt House, 88 College Avenue, ca. 1890. Elm Street north of Davis Square was renamed College Avenue in the 1890s. A number of fine houses were built on College Avenue by Somerville businessmen, including Charles Lockhardt, an undertaker. This fine example of the Queen Anne Style, with curved panes of stained glass and a three-story corner tower, is also representative of houses built in the 90—lot William A. Russell subdivision which adjoins College Avenue.



Franklin F. Phillips House, 211 Holland Street, ca. 1890. Holland Avenue was built in 1867 to connect Davis Square and Broadway. Among large Queen Anne style houses built on Holland in the 1880s and 1890s was this square towered residence for Franklin F. Phillips, a chemical salesman and a Somerville city official.



Simpson Street. Two family houses built on former quarry land, ca. 1890.



9 Chandler Street, ca. 1870. Chandler Street was developed after the Civil War; this was one of the first houses to be built on the block. The mansard-roofed corner tower is a distinctive feature. H.E. French, an early owner, was a salesman.



North Somerville Station, Broadway near Boston Street, Photograph ca. 1900. This station on the Boston and Lowell Railroad served passengers from the Powderhouse, Tufts, and West Somerville area.