

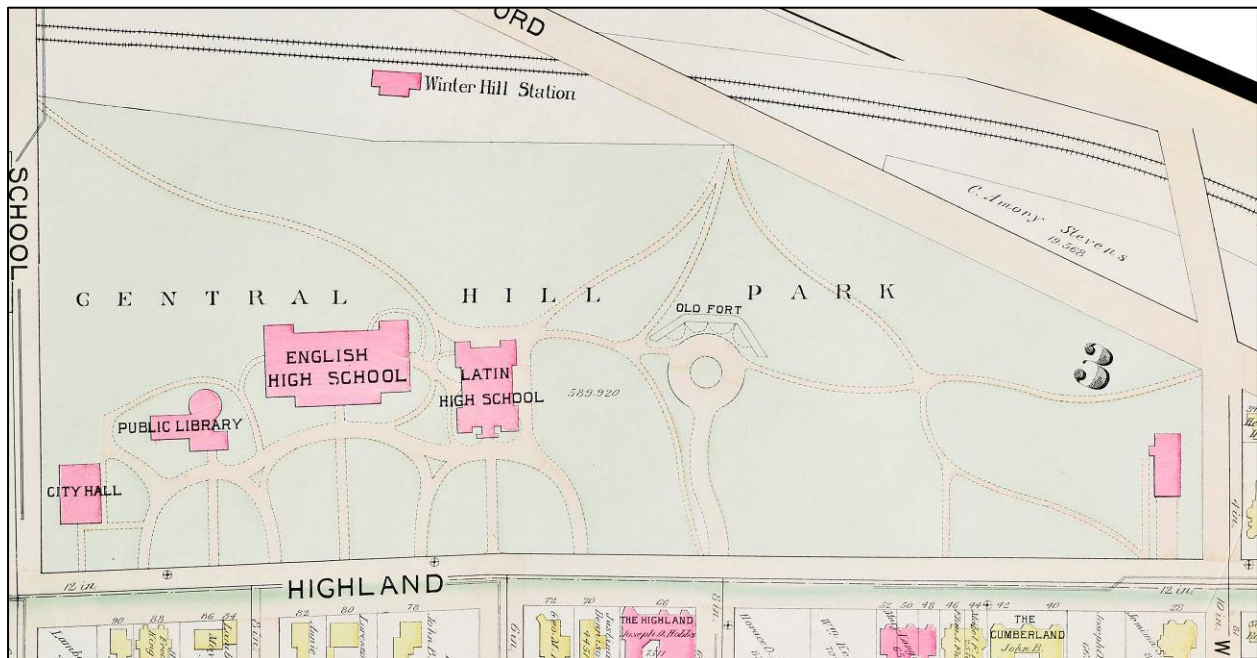
ArtsUnion Walking Tour of Union Square, Fall 2012

“Historic Somerville: Its Civic Hilltop to the Wyatt Brothers Brickyards and Fresh Pond Ice”

Researched and Led by Edward W. Gordon, President,
Victorian Society in America, NE Chapter

This walking tour explores some of the most striking features of Somerville’s historic land uses – starting with its hilltop civic center, continuing through its lofty Prospect Hill residential neighborhood, and ending with some vintage commercial buildings in Union Square and industrial sites in Ward 2, that were once associated with brick-making and ice distribution. The walk will highlight the various personalities, land-making projects, and transportation improvements, as well as the forces outside Somerville, that helped shape the City’s architecture and development pattern.

Somerville was long known as “the land beyond the neck.” This was due to its location along the narrow strip, or neck of land at Sullivan Square that linked Somerville to Charlestown prior to land-making in the late 1800s. The residents separated from Charlestown in 1842 and established their own town. This independence stemmed from the introduction of rail lines in the future Town during the 1830s, and the almost immediate rise of industries along their length. The majority of the buildings noted on this tour were built during a forty year span, from 1870-1910. This period occurred shortly before Somerville incorporated as a city in 1872 and lasted until the onset of World War I in the 1910s. During this era of tremendous growth Union Square rose as a major center for the City’s commercial, spiritual, and industrial life. Its brick industry declined as resources were depleted and land became more valuable for house construction by the 1880s. Earlier industries, such as the American Tube Works, meat packing concerns, glass works, and others, expanded significantly at the periphery of the Square. From 1890-1910 an unprecedented building boom created fifty percent (50%) of the City’s current housing stock, while the population shot up from 40,152 to 77,236!



The Municipal Civic Center in Central Hill Park

The Municipal Civic Center in Central Hill Park

Central Hill includes the area between Highland Avenue and the streets of School, Walnut and Medford. Here one finds Somerville's City Hall, comprehensive High School, and Central Library, as well as a wonderful collection of civic sculptures, set off by a leafy Central Hill Park, the City's oldest public green space. During the late 1700s, this hilltop land was called "the Church lots" because it was owned by the First Church of Charlestown. It was later purchased in 1870 from Jacob Sleeper of Boston, one of the founders of Boston University, at a cost of \$38,000 to the Town. Indeed, Central Hill Park was the only dedicated parkland pre-dating the City's incorporation in 1872. Although Central Hill has been the civic center of the community for over 150 years it has evolved significantly, with many alterations, demolitions and changes of use to the buildings atop it. A viewing of old photographs, for example, depicts a high school, library and fire station that predate their modern counterparts. The north side of this

Central Hill in 1895 standing panoramic view of Winter Hill over the rooftops of Gilman Square can be seen. The middle of the park represents the site of the French Redoubt where troops gathered at the onset of the American Revolution, determined to overthrow their British oppressors.

The current **City Hall** building has changed greatly over time, with a series of alterations and adaptive reuse additions. The nucleus of this pressed brick building is a high school built in the Greek Revival style in 1852. In 1866, six years before Somerville was incorporated as a City, Town officials moved their offices from a building on Forster Street to the second floor of this



high school atop Central Hill. In 1873 the Police Court moved out of City Hall into a new headquarters on Bow Street, and a public library was installed in its former space. Then the library moved into a building of its own in 1885, located between City Hall and a Latin School. The first major enlargement occurred in 1896 when a rear wing designed by Thomas T. M. Sargent was added behind the Highland Avenue side of the building. In 1924 a second, more radical alteration occurred using the designs of Ritchie, Parsons and Taylor, a Boston architectural firm. The entire orientation and size of the building was changed with the addition of a large north wing that housed a chamber for the Board of Aldermen on the second

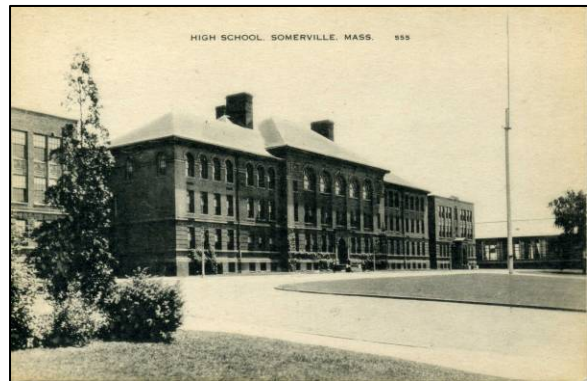
floor. This resulted in symmetrical east and west facades, as well as a generally more imposing appearance. The gable end pediment of the original building was removed and a third story was added. The entrance was relocated to the original main block where it still remains. Key elements include such Classical Revival details as the two colossal Ionic columns set *in antis*, the broad wood spandrels between the first and second story windows, and the addition of a clock tower, spire and weather vane. Columns are '*in antis*' when they stand between square piers call *anta*.



The sculpture positioned directly in front of City Hall, facing Highland Avenue commemorates the heroic war death of 23-year-old Somerville resident **George Dilboy**. He is thought to be the first Greek-American to receive the Medal of Honor during World War I. He earned it for leading an attack on a machinegun position and continuing to fire at the enemy despite being seriously wounded. Before falling himself, he killed two of the enemy and dispersed the remainder of the gun crew. General John Pershing listed Dilboy as one of the 10 greatest heroes of the war. The monument was commissioned and paid for by the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. The Dilboy portrait bust was created by an unidentified sculptor associated with the Grenier Studio in Boston. The photo

depicts the unveiling in a public outdoor ceremony in August, 1931, which was attended by City and religious dignitaries, schoolgirls portraying allegories, and an amazingly large crowd, estimated at 4,000.

Close by to City Hall sits **Somerville High School**, a sprawling three-story brick building enlivened by terra cotta and brownstone trimmings. Somerville High School encompasses an 1896 central tripartite building that represents the work of the important Boston architectural firm of Hartwell and Richardson--a firm that designed the former Exeter Street Theatre in Boston's Back Bay in 1886 and the Cambridge City Hall in 1889. The 1896 structural component of the building was originally enclosed by a massive hip roof that was destroyed by fire during the 1960s. The High School's east and west wings were added in 1928 by Frank I Cooper Contractors with a horizontal orientation amplified by brownstone sills and belt courses on the upper stories. The building blends elements of the Italian Renaissance and Classical Revival styles—the arched windows of the main blocks on the third story present a pleasing repetition of curved lines.. The Romanesque Revival library of 1885 was demolished to accommodate the 1928 west wing.



Continue eastward along the civic center campus past the most modern addition (1986-87) that houses the technical education component of the SHS to the Civil War Memorial.

The Somerville Civil War Memorial, also called “**American Valor**,” was designed in 1908 by



the highly accomplished Augustus Lukeman. Dedicated atop Central Hill on May 31, 1909, the ceremony was presided over by none other than the former Governor of Massachusetts, Curtis Guild. The City’s Poet Laureate, Sam Walter Foss, read his poem entitled “The Unrewarded Dead.” The bronze figures, cast by the Gorham Company of Providence Rhode Island, depict an angel serving as a bodyguard for a marching soldier. The granite base was created by

Lukeman’s assistant, George B. Howe. Mr. Lukeman, born in Richmond Virginia in 1870, studied in New York and Paris, and was part of an art colony in Stockbridge, MA that revolved around the great American sculptor, Daniel Chester French. One of Lukeman’s early projects was a design for a statue in Adams, MA that commemorated the assassinated President William McKinley. Lukeman’s most renowned work is the Confederate Memorial (1916-1925), a sculptural bas relief, situated on the steep granite slopes of Stone Mountain, just north of Atlanta, Georgia.

If the **Somerville Public Library** at **79 Highland Avenue** looks like a not-so-distant cousin of the Boston Public Library (BPL) at Copley Square, indeed, it is. Early in his career, the architect for the Central Library, Edward Lippincott Tilton (1861-1933), worked for the firm McKim, Mead and White, that designed the BPL. Both the Boston and Somerville libraries were designed to look like over-sized Italian Renaissance palaces. Interestingly, all three of Somerville’s public libraries were among the hundreds funded by Andrew Carnegie, the famous steel magnate based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As a poor boy of high intelligence Carnegie grew up in Scotland, and was invited to study in the private library of a wealthy family. He credited his later success to the early access to books, and this inspired him to fund public libraries throughout America during his lifetime.



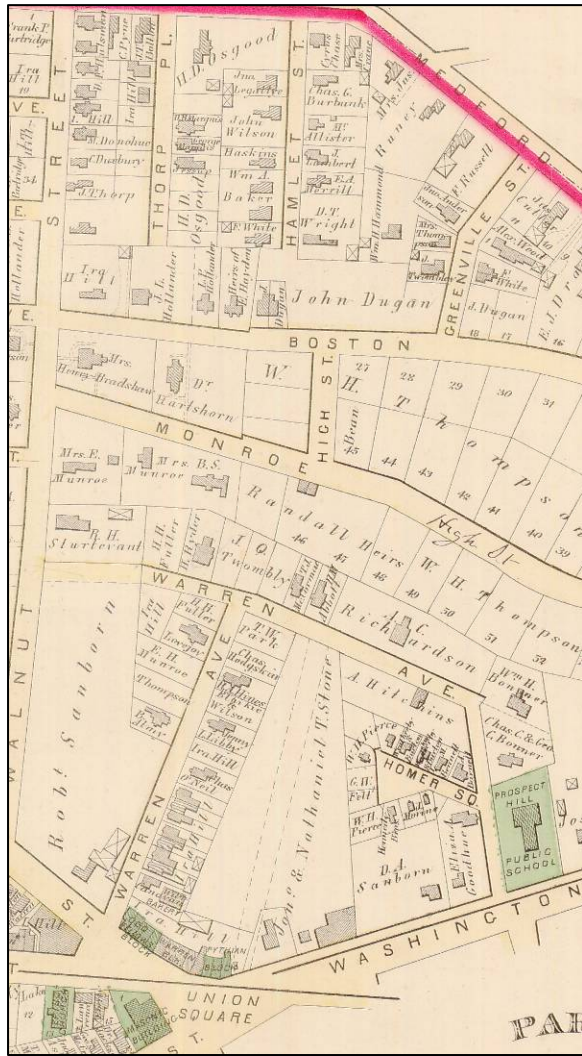
Directly in front of the Central Library is the **Spanish War Monument**. The impressive piece commemorates the service of Somerville veterans in two armed conflicts against Spain, in Cuba and the Philippines at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, as well as in a third conflict in Asia. Officially known as the China Relief Expedition, this conflict was called the Boxer Rebellion by western journalists. Nicknamed Boxers by the western press, this group of radical northern Chinese extremists were called “the Righteous and Harmonious Fists” in China--a fringe group that had an unfortunate record of harrassing and killing Chinese Christians and westerners based in China from 1900-1901.

Sculptor Raymond A. Porter (1883-1949) was responsible for the design of the monument. Its 12' granite base is topped by a 3-4' bronze eagle, while its side ledges hold two bronze figures depicting a soldier and a sailor. Dedicated in December 1929, the casting of the bronze eagle and flanking figures is credited to T.F. McGann and Sons Company of Somerville. Sculptor Raymond Averill Porter was born in Hermon, New York in 1883. He later lived and worked as a teacher and sculptor in Chicago during the early 1900s, and later in Chelmsford, Watertown, and Boston, MA. He taught at the Boston Museum School of Fine Art.

From the Library cross Highland Avenue and proceed southward on Walnut Street for the Prospect Hill neighborhood part of the tour.

Prospect Hill is a drumlin of 115 feet, and Somerville's highest eminence. The Hill is bound by Highland Avenue, McGrath Highway, and Washington Street in the Union Square area.

Walnut Street is one of eleven very old rangeways or county roads that run all the way from Franklin Street in East Somerville to North Street in West Somerville, and that hark back to Colonial Times. The range ways along Broadway and Milk Row, now known as Somerville Avenue, enabled agricultural and dairy products from outlying farms to reach the markets of Charlestown, Cambridge and Boston. Very few houses were located on Walnut Street until around 1850 when the Munroes, Vinals and Hills began to develop the upper south slope of Prospect Hill.



Built 1860-1865, **67 Walnut Street** is a well-preserved example of an Italianate house that provides evidence of houses being built in Somerville during the Civil War, in spite of that era's turbulence and uncertainty. It does not appear on the 1857 map of Somerville, and the earliest known owner is Abraham Folsom of Boston, listed here by 1865. During the 1870s, Lydia and Caleb Duxbury owned this property, while Edwin Ireland lived here beginning c.1875. He was undoubtedly a descendant of the Ireland family of farmers who settled in Somerville well before the American Revolution.

A cluster of architecturally distinguished houses representing three distinct stages in the development of Prospect Hill can be seen at the intersection of Summit Avenue, and Boston and Walnut Streets. The first is a Greek Revival residence at **91 Boston Street** built circa 1850 for realtor Ira Hill. A verandah and 2-story bay were

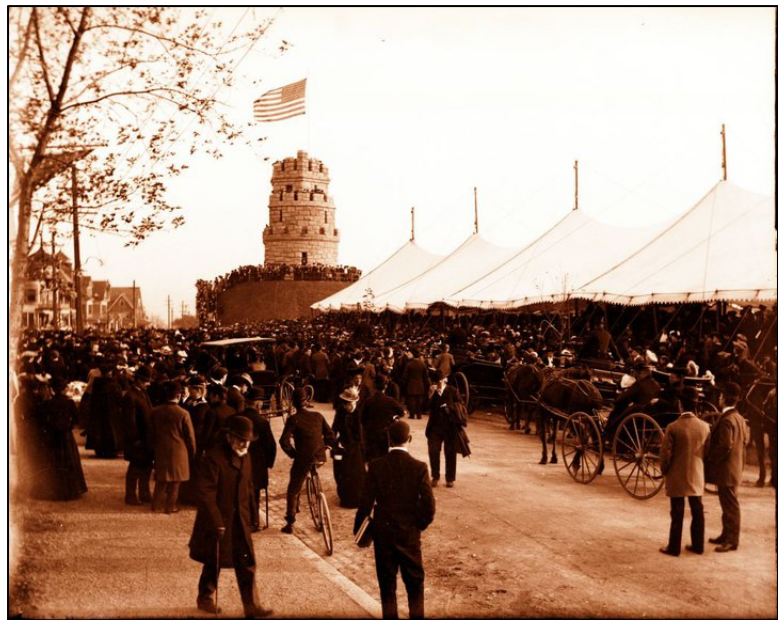
added during the 1890s. Then across from this, built circa 1870, is the Italianate mansard residence of businessman George Simpson at **48 Walnut Street**. Now look at two striking Queen Anne houses on the left: the palatial, towered residence of provisions dealer Louisville Niles at **45 Walnut Street** built in 1890, and the enormous double house at **3 Summit Avenue** constructed in 1888 for George Hill and his son. Amazingly each unit contained twelve rooms, plus a reception hall with a bath and a laundry!

82 Munroe Street – “**The Grandview.**” Samuel Kelley designed this early apartment building on the ridge of Prospect Hill. The original owner was Elbridge Park, co-owner of the famous Durgin Park restaurant in the Quincy Market area of Boston.

88 Munroe Street was constructed for Benjamin S. and Hannah Munroe in two stages, during the 1850s and 1880s. Benjamin was the son of prosperous grain dealer Robert Munroe, who along with Robert Aldersey and Ira Hill, began to subdivide Prospect Hill for residential house lots around 1850.

2 Bigelow Street is a well-preserved example of both the Stick style and Queen Anne style built in 1886 for Boston Paint dealer Henry A. Robbins. The contractor was Ivory Bean, significant for his construction of the St. Botolph Street neighborhood in Boston in the 1890s. Nearby **10 Bigelow Street** was built in 1887, and boasts one of the finest encircling verandas in the City.

Crowning the top of the hill on Munroe Street is the **Prospect Hill Park and Memorial Observatory**. The Park is a product of the 1890s when a movement among Somerville citizens gained momentum to set aside park land in the midst of unprecedented, city-wide building. Dedicated in 1903, the Prospect Hill monument was designed by Ernest Bailey in the Medieval Revival style that apparently references the old regime back in England that was overthrown by the upstart American colonials—a struggle that began in the Boston area and



with Prospect Hill playing a strategic role. Who would believe that this present day peaceful hilltop neighborhood once served as the most formidable citadel in the Colonist lines during the Siege of Boston from June 17, 1775 to March 17, 1776! Here, General George Washington’s Continental Army watched with jubilation the British evacuation from Boston and the harbor on March 17, 1776. Prospect Hill’s great, yet not widely known claim to fame, is the place where the new flag of the thirteen colonies, also known as the “Grand Union Flag,” was

unfurled in defiance of the British for the first time, on January 1, 1776. One of the last great skirmishes between the British Red Coats and local Minutemen occurred on April 19, 1775 at the base of Prospect Hill in the Union Square area, and the Hill was the site of a British prisoner of war camp in 1777-1778. In the early 1860s Prospect Hill was once again host to a sizeable encampment of soldiers—recent recruits soon to be fighting further south for the Union cause. Come back to the Park on noon of January 1st for a moving program that annually commemorates the raising of the Grand Union Flag.



Rounding the eastern corner of Prospect Hill Park, descend to Columbus Avenue via the sidewalk that runs along Prospect Hill Parkway. Turn right and proceed to the corner of Warren Street and Columbus Avenue to consider the impressive concentration of substantial Second Empire residences on these streets.

Columbus Avenue was set out around 1870 on land owned by Ira Hill, one of the early homeowners of the neighborhood atop Prospect Hill. This street was variously called High Street and Warren Avenue until circa 1880 when the street became known as Columbus Avenue. Few communities in Massachusetts can boast such a fine concentration of houses designed in the Mansard or Second Empire style. Particularly noteworthy in terms of their substantial forms, Italianate elements, and towered center pavilions are the circa 1880 houses of James H. Brooks and S.E Brackett House at 61 and 63 Columbus Avenue, respectively along with the houses descending Warren Avenue. Note features such as bay windows, rope mouldings, towered center pavilions and Italianate brackets, as well as the substantial volumes of the mansard roofs.



Now turn eastward to follow the thoroughfare as far as Bonner Avenue, and walk right by Homer Court, a charming cul-de-sac bordered by Italianate and Mansard style houses. Also noteworthy on the east side of the street is the circa 1845 Greek Revival house originally owned by William B. Bonner. Bonner Avenue may have started out as a carriage way leading to Bonner's house which has sustained a few alterations, but retains its sizeable lot which is currently graced with lovely gardens.



Down the hill is the **United States Post Office/Somerville Main Post Office** at **237 Washington Street**. Its site, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, was occupied by the wood-frame Prospect Hill Elementary School. In 1935-1936, Architects Louis Adolph Simon and Maurice P. Mead provided the City of Somerville with an unusually fine example of a Colonial Revival post office building. Rising a single story from a granite block basement to a slate shingle-

sheathed hip roof, its walls are laid up in Flemish bond brick with limestone trimmings. Built during the Great Depression, this post office perhaps not surprisingly displays a colorful mural funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It depicts a Revolutionary War era scene, painted by Ross Embrose Moffett (1888-1871), a key



figure in the Provincetown Art Colony of the early 20th century. The building's future use is uncertain as the Federal Government has declared it surplus and intends to sell it.

The triangular island at Washington Street and Somerville Avenue has long been occupied by a fire station, first with an "Engine House" in the 1830s and then by the current **Fire Station at 92 Union Square**, built in 1903-1904. The City's Commissioner, Walter T. Littlefield provided its Georgian Revival design, with a tower capped by an octagonal roof and a Colonial weathervane. Although the station's clock tower has been reduced in height, the structure remains a major focal point within the square and currently serves as the headquarters for Somerville Cable Access Television (SCAT).

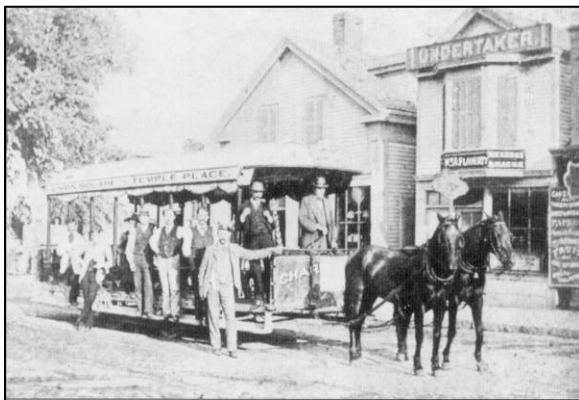


From SCAT proceed to the heart of Union Square to the plaza which hosts a wide variety of cultural events, including a weekly farmers market seasonally.

Union Square was initially called "Sand Pit Square" because its sandy, clay pit-dotted areas yielded a fine grade of silica used in glass and brick-making. Union Square became a major commercial center due to its location at an important crossroads in eastern Somerville. The Square's major thoroughfares, Washington Street, Prospect Street and Somerville Avenue (formerly Charlestown Lane and Milk Row), originated as seventeenth and eighteenth century trade routes. Middlesex County farm products were hauled through the Square to be sold at markets in Charlestown and Boston. The first railroad lines were introduced near the Square during the 1830s and 1840s which further spurred area residential and commercial development.

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the rise of industries south and west of the Square, such as the Union Glass Company and American Tube Works, as well as numerous small woodworking shops, ice businesses, carriage-making and brick manufacturing concerns. The success of these enterprises insured that Union Square was an important contributor to the commercial prosperity of Somerville well into the twentieth century. The Square served as a major recruitment center during the Civil War and became known as "Liberty Pole Square" after Somerville firemen erected a flag pole in the center of the Square. The name "Union Square" references the Union of northern states that fought the southern Confederate States of America during the Civil War. Union Square was host to a Union Army recruitment station and an encampment of Union troops atop Prospect Hill.

Following the Civil War, both Union and Davis Squares evolved into larger commercial centers serving a rapidly growing community. In 1872 Somerville incorporated as a City, and between 1870 and 1920, its population increased six fold –from 14,685 in 1870 to 93,091 by 1920! Over time waves of immigrants have called Union Square home -- from the Irish of the mid-nineteenth century to the Italians, Greeks and Portuguese of the early 20th century, and in more recent times to members of the Brazilian, Haitian and Hispanic communities.



The wood-frame **Robert A. Vinal House** at **15 Union Square** is the sole survivor of the earliest residential development in Union Square. Vinal, a grain dealer operating in the Square, built the circa 1845 Greek Revival house that was later converted to commercial use. Old photographs show a much larger Greek Revival end gable building on the west side of Vinal's building known as "The Oasis" which housed a grocery store and was also a popular meeting place for the town's residents.

Striking an elegant design note on the north side of the paved pedestrian plaza is the former **Somerville Police Headquarters**. Built in 1932 from designs provided by an unidentified architect, this building was the successor to the first Police Headquarters building that still stands on Bow Street. It evidences several different architectural styles: Italian Renaissance

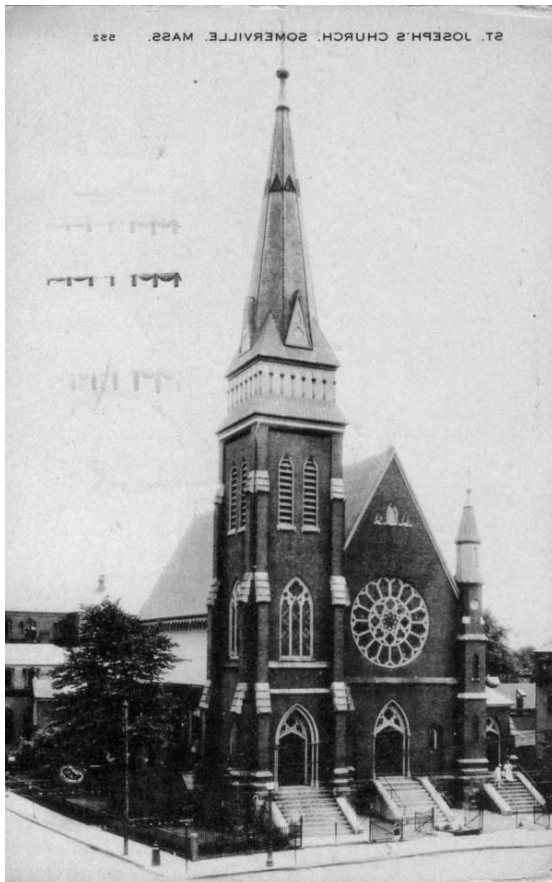
Revival on the main façade, in the console keystone arch above the front doors, and the rusticated concrete on the first story; Georgian Revival in the second story's segmental arched window and stone corner quoins; and Federal Revival with its wedge-shaped key stone window lintels, Ionic pilasters, and paneled parapet. The only facility of its type in Somerville, it housed more than 150 officers and a constabulary when it opened its doors in 1933. In the mid-1980s, the City consolidated the police and fire department headquarters in a rehabilitated MBTA garage at 218-220 Washington Street. The 1932 building subsequently was adapted for reuse as a mixed-use building with offices and a restaurant, initially the first Elephant Walk in the Boston area.



Although drastically altered by a mid-1970s modernization, the **Stone Building** (also known as **Barrister's Hall**) at **57-61 Union Square** retains its original form and prominent corner site. For many years this building housed the Somerville Savings Bank. The building was built in 1891 at the behest of Jonathan Stone, the bank's treasurer. Stone's family had deep roots in Somerville—with the first Stones settling in Somerville well before the American Revolution. During the early 1990s, Be Sargent Allen, a well-known Somerville artist, painted the mural on the east side of the building that commemorates the Grand Union Flag Raising on Prospect Hill in 1776.

From the Stone Building cross over to the corner of Washington Street and Somerville Avenue to the Church.

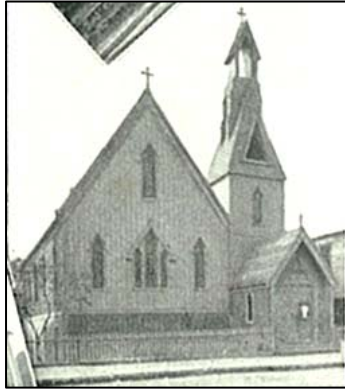
St. Joseph's Washington 1870-1874 in the provided by notable was forced to worship in Cambridge. On congregation architect James of worship for Christopher C. the lower congregation for the church for fear that cause it to significant and



Roman Catholic Church, at and Webster Streets, was built in Gothic Revival style from plans James Murphy. Somerville's population of 2,000 Catholics walk considerable distances to churches in Charlestown and January 20, 1870, the purchased the Mayo estate, and Murphy designed a first house Catholics. In 1871, Monsignor McGrath held the first services in church, and presided over the the next sixty-three years! Sadly, steeple was taken down in 1978 structural instability would collapse. Union Square lost a very striking landmark. The

cross can be seen in the front yard.

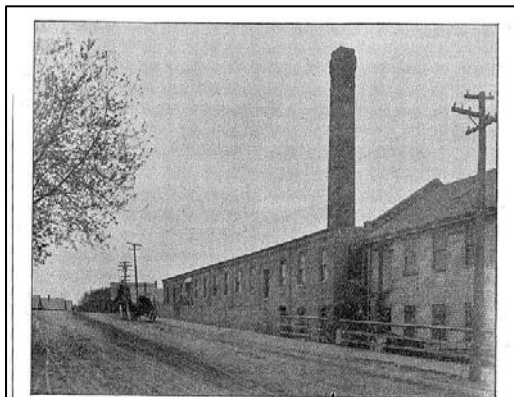
Head southwest on Washington Street to view the Second Empire William H. Burt House (1874) at 264 Washington Street, noteworthy for its formal center pavilion which rises to a pyramidal mansard roof. Next door is the former St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Parochial School at 268-272 Washington Street built in 1890 and converted to 20 residential units in 1981 by the Somerville Housing Authority.



In contrast to the prominence of St. Joseph's in Union Square, the former **St. Thomas Episcopal Church** has been largely forgotten, hidden from view by a tight cluster of trees, houses and commercial buildings. From the foot of 269 Washington Street's driveway, however, one can glimpse part of its south wall. St. Thomas was designed in the Gothic Revival style (1870-1875) by the construction firm of George Trefren & Son. It is a one-and-one-half story, end gable building with a brick foundation that supports walls whose board and batten siding is currently covered with vinyl. The building started out as a rectangular hall measuring 25 feet by 70 feet. By 1897 a vestibule and spire-surmounted tower enlivened the northwest corner. Between 1907 and 1913 the side aisles and chancel originally planned for the building were added to the south end. The tower was taken down around 1930 and by then, the vestibule on the main Somerville Avenue façade had achieved its present full length. The church beginnings are rooted in St. John's Episcopal Church on Devens Street in Charlestown. The first pastor, George W. Durrell, presided over a congregation of just over 130 parishioners from 1870-1895. During the 1960s the congregation dissolved and since then the building has housed a nursery school, Haitian and Hispanic religious groups, and non-profit agencies.

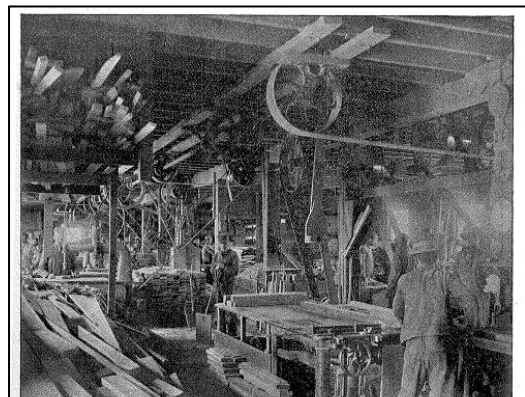
Note the circa 1870 Victorian residences bordering Washington Street between the Sherman Café and Hawkins Street. Together with the church buildings across the street, these Victorian era residences provide a fine vintage streetscape at one of Union Square's key western entrances.

269 Washington Street is a solid example of the Mansard style, while **273 Washington Street** is a well-preserved Italianate house configured with a side hall plan. It was originally owned by John Ashley, a Boston lamp fixtures dealer. The wood-frame double house at **277-275 Washington Street** was originally designed in a more Italianate style, but it acquired a third story and a more Federal Revival sensibility during the early 20th century. During the 1870s, John G. Smith, a superintendent at Metallic Art Works in East Cambridge, lived here.



I. H. BROWN & COMPANY'S MILL, WASHINGTON STREET.

The two-story red brick, flat roofed industrial building at

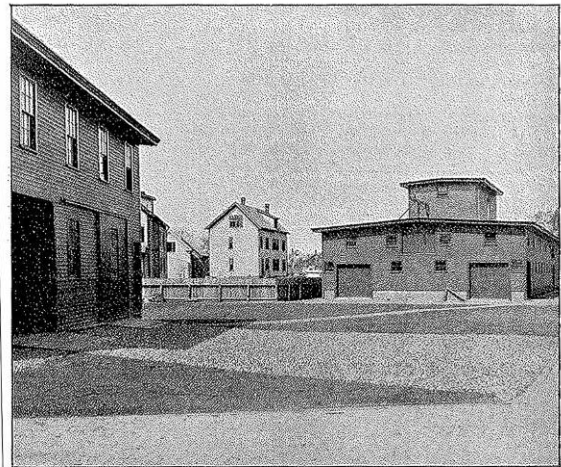


INTERIOR OF I. H. BROWN & COMPANY'S MOULDING AND PLANING MILL.

285 Washington Street, corner of Hawkins Street, originally housed the **I.H. Brown Moulding Company**. The building dates to the late 1880s and is typical of the carpentry and woodworking concerns that rose to the fore during the boom years of Cambridge and Somerville's expansion. The Brown Co. moved here in 1886 after a fire destroyed their headquarters in Cambridge. The company specialized in mouldings of all descriptions, in addition to window frames, sashes, drawer cases, and the like. One of the company's specialties was wooden exhibition cases for museums, including Harvard University's Agassiz Museum of Natural History.

By 1928, its first floor was used for sawing and planing, the second floor for cabinet work, and the basement for planing and storage. The building currently houses Burma Designs, the Fringe Artist Design Cooperative, and Moroccan Caravan, while Metro Pedal Power rents space in the basement.

All that remains of the once thriving **Fresh Pond Ice Company** distribution facility at **321 Washington Street** are a couple of circa early 1890s utilitarian wooden structures, one of which now hosts the Washington Street Art Center (WSAC), and a parking lot once used for ice storage facilities. The driveway that leads northward from Washington Street and parts of the parking lot were once alive with the clip clop of horses' hoofs and the voices of 50-75 men who lifted ice and drove delivery wagons—indeed, over 80 horses drove 35 ice wagons for this company in its early 20th century hey day! The Fresh Pond Ice Company was organized in 1882 and is not to be confused



SECTION OF THE YARD SHOWING STABLE AND CARRIAGE HOUSE.

with the better known Boston Ice Company in Cambridge that was in business on Fresh Pond by 1840. The latter was run by the famous Frederick Tudor, Boston's "ice king," a true visionary who saw that the railroads could haul blocks of ice harvested from ponds located just outside of Boston to distant markets, including from Fresh Pond to the Charlestown waterfront along the Fitchburg Railroad. Even more remarkable, blocks of ice were placed in the tin-lined holds of tall ships, packed in straw, and then miraculously shipped as far away as the West Indies and even Calcutta, India without melting!



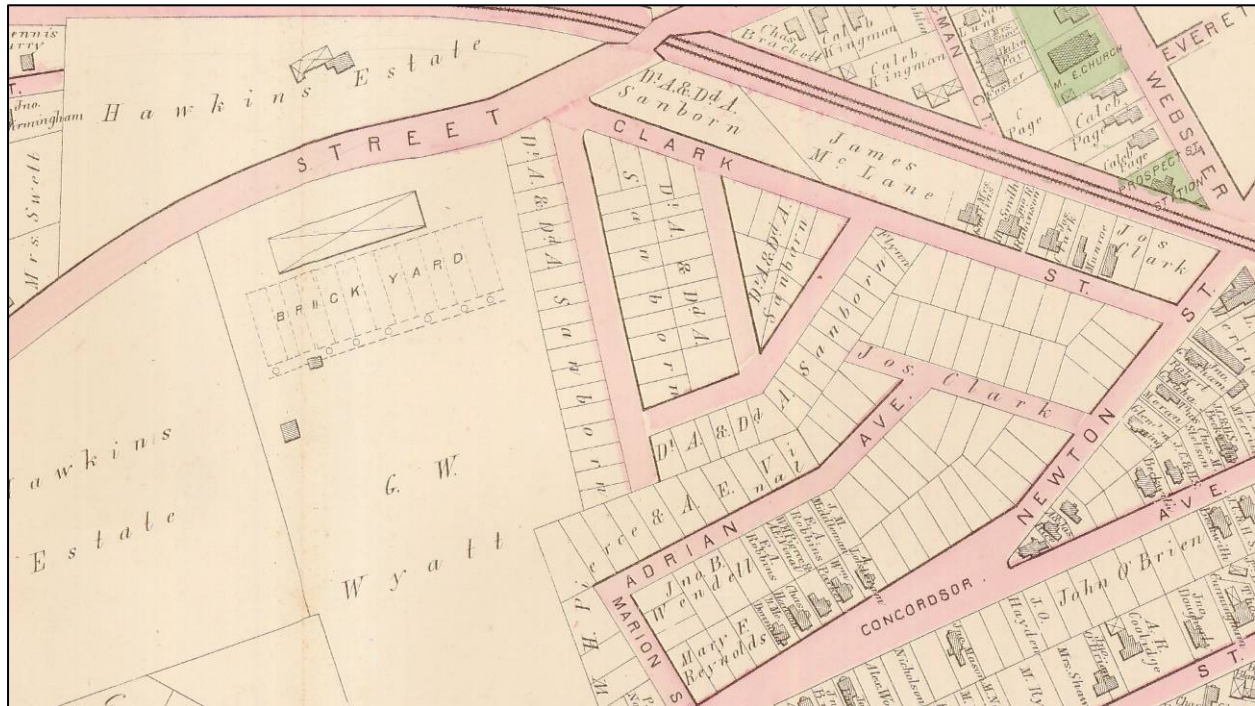
On the other hand, the Fresh Pond Ice Company from the start focused on distribution to local, rather than foreign markets. It was a spin-off of Jacob Hittinger & Sons Ice Company. The Hittinger brothers are credited with developing a market for ice in households throughout New England—a turn of events made possible by the rise of modern "ice boxes" manufactured by the Eddy Company of Dorchester, MA, as well as

others in America. However, during the 1880s, just as the Fresh Pond Company was beginning to prosper, the City of Cambridge was mounting a campaign to banish the two ice companies from the shores of Fresh Pond so that it could be used exclusively as a reservoir for public drinking water. By 1891 the ice companies were no longer a presence on the pond and Fresh Pond Ice had to move its operations to Brookline, New Hampshire. The ice was then shipped to Boston in refrigerated cars via the Boston & Maine Railroad.

The Somerville distribution facility for the Fresh Pond Ice Company was established on the former Hawkins Estate during the 1890s. This parcel is wedged in between the Fitchburg (later B & M) Railroad and Washington Street, and by 1900, it encompassed two large ice storage sheds and three much smaller buildings—one of which survives as the Washington Street Art Center building/art gallery. The ice that was stored in Somerville was harvested from Lake Muscatanipus in New Hampshire. In contrast to the Somerville distribution facility, the Brookline headquarters of the company was much larger, encompassing eleven immense ice houses which had a storage capacity of 70,000 tons! Over 250 New Hampshire men were employed in harvesting “the ice crop.” Famous for the purity of its frozen water, the Fresh Pond Ice Company went out of business after a fire destroyed its New Hampshire facility in 1935 and electric refrigerators became common.

Cross Washington Street and continue south down Perry Street, originally named North Wyatt Street, to Lincoln Park. Perry Street was named in memory of Mayor Albion Perry, in office from 1896-1898.

Lincoln Park, one of Somerville's oldest recreation areas, was planned as early as 1896. The park's lawns and walks were in place by 1900, although the small pond at its southwest corner was filled in during the transition from brick yard to public green space. Lincoln Park occupies



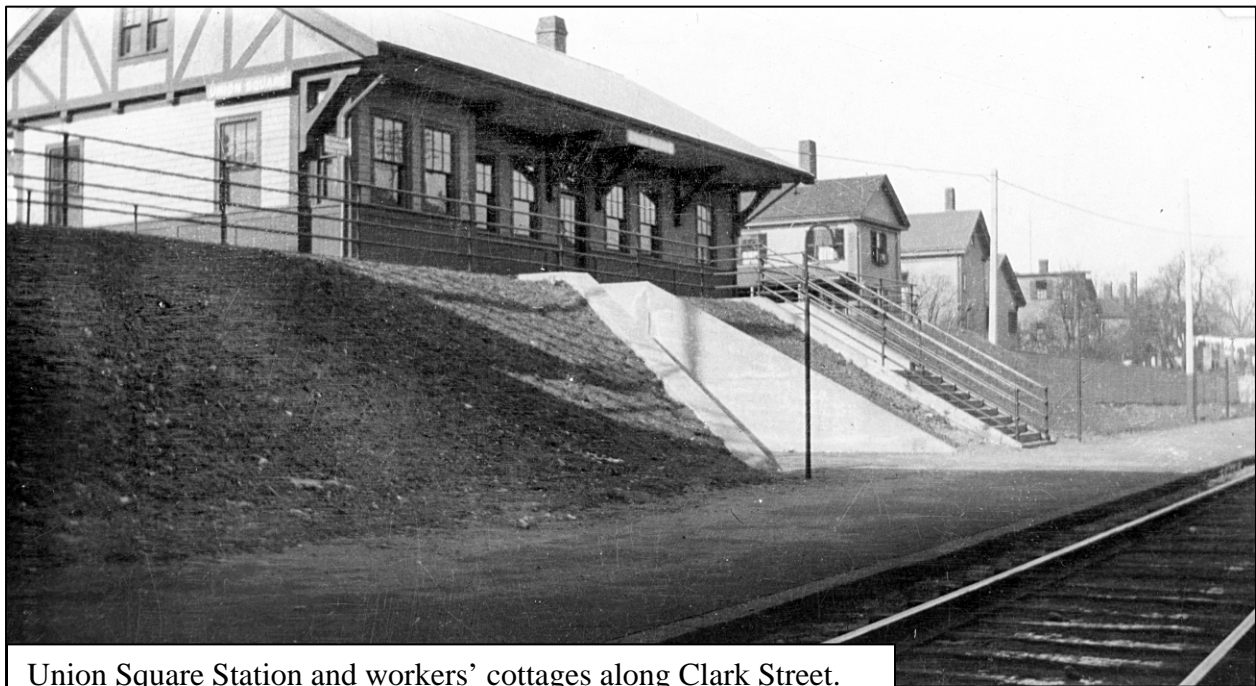
the site of **George Wyatt's brickyards** which were called "Wyatt's Pitts" by local residents. George Wyatt lived nearby at 33 Beacon Street. The brick industry was a major component of Somerville's economy from 1820-1880. Somerville's soil was well-suited for brick-making, and it was a commercial pursuit primarily conducted in parts of the City bordering waterways, such as the Miller's River (now completely filled-in) in eastern Somerville, and especially along the Mystic River. In addition, the Tufts brickyards once dominated the landscape west of Cedar Street. The demise of Somerville's brick-making industry was due to the higher value placed on land for house construction. The last brickyards shut down during the late 1890s when the William A. Sanborn family closed their concern, open since 1849. According to the late 19th century Somerville atlases the Wyatt brickyards consisted of a long rectangular structure bordering the Washington Street edge of the property, and a line of contiguous chimneys and kilns just to the south of the shed. Clay pits took up the remaining land that extended south to Lincoln Parkway.

On the northeast side of Lincoln Park sits the **Albert F. Argenziano School**, a kindergarten-8th grade facility built in 2007 to replace another elementary school, known as the Lincoln Park Community School. The latter had been designed by The Architects Collaborative (TAC), a Cambridge architectural firm in the 1970's when the New Brutalism style was held in high regard.

*Follow Lincoln Parkway to **Marion Street** to view two unusual rows of workers' housing, each with six and seven-units built after 1884—too late to be brick workers' housing since the Wyatt brickyards*

shut down during the late 1880s. From Marion Street double back to Lincoln Parkway, and turn right onto Clark Street.

Clark, Newton and other streets in the area were set out around 1860 on the Joseph Clark Estate. Mr. Clark lived on Elm Place in Somerville and worked in Boston as a bookkeeper. The Clark land was purchased primarily by the Sanborn family. Several houses on the street can be found on the 1852 Draper map and appear to have been built twenty years before the street was officially set out. Clark Street was hemmed in between the Fitchburg Railroad tracks, Concord Street, and a tight enclave of streets bordering the southern edge of the Wyatt brickyards. Notice **28 Clark Street** which is a modest Italianate wooden dwelling with its northeast gable facing the street. The roof's dormers are of interest for their distinctive forms and crisp lines. The double Greek Revival house at **17-19 Clark Street** still retains the original multi-pane side lights and transoms over the front doors. The Greek Revival residence at **11 Clark Street** has a relatively substantial kitchen ell that appears to date to the 1840s.



Union Square Station and workers' cottages along Clark Street.

From Clark Street walk back to Union Square via Webster Avenue, and rest both your eyes and feet at one of the Square's many ethnic eateries and watering holes.

We hope that you enjoyed this tour of one section of historic Somerville. For brochures about other historic neighborhoods or properties, please call (617)625-6600, ext. 2500 or visit www.somerville.gov/departments/ospcd/historic-preservation

This self-guided tour brochure was prepared by Brandon Wilson, Executive Director and Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner to the City's Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC). The SHPC administers historic districts, advises homeowners, provides historic and technical information and is an arm of City government, through the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD). Funding comes from the ArtsUnion Project overseen by

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Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Fall 2012 Union Square Walking Tour Map The Hilltop to Wyatt Brickyards to Fresh Pond Ice



S = Start; F = Finish, Courtesy of Bing Maps

The tour was researched, organized, and led by Edward Gordon, and the brochure was prepared by Brandon Wilson and Kristi Chase, staff planners to the SHPC.

We hope that you enjoyed this historic Somerville tour. For more information or additional brochures, please visit www.somerville.gov/departments/ospcd/historic-preservation.

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