

## **Brackets, Belt Courses and Bay Windows:**

### **Discovering the Rich Victorian Charm of East Somerville**

*Meeting Place: In front of the Mt. Vernon Restaurant at 14 Broadway, on the Charlestown-Somerville border. The tour will take approximately two hours. At the end participants are encouraged to continue their exploration of East Somerville and have a bite to eat and drink at one of the many culinary spots in the neighborhood, along Broadway.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This East Somerville walking tour is focused primarily on houses located between the Somerville/Charlestown border and Glen Street. During the 1840s and early 1850s, East Somerville, together with Prospect Hill and Spring Hill, was among the first sections of Somerville to experience residential development in a more or less comprehensive manner. Thanks to the vision and calculated risk-taking of local businessmen, suburban subdivisions made the leap from plans on paper to three dimensional reality in what had been Charlestown's remote "land beyond the Neck", to later become the independent City of Somerville. One goal of this tour is to showcase private residences that have been designated as Local Historic Districts (LHDs), or are proposed for such in the near future. Other goals of the tour are to highlight different architectural designs popular during the Victorian era (1837-1901) and to learn more about the neighborhood's early homeowners and their sometimes-colorful stories. To do this, we will view buildings reflecting a variety of architectural styles, and note the characteristic features of Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne buildings. We will also share the "back stories" that explain how these styles captured the imagination of various builders and homeowners.

The beginnings of East Somerville as a neighborhood coincided with Somerville incorporating as a town in 1842. Around 1840, as the local economy began to recover from the financial Panic of 1837, the eastern section of the City became a desirable new frontier for upscale residential construction. Home-buyers who worked for Boston companies were able to commute to their downtown jobs via the new train stations that were within comfortable walking. For example, the Boston & Lowell Railroad was completed as early as 1835, with a Washington Street station near Joy Street. The Boston & Maine Railroad Extension opened its passenger station at the eastern edge of Somerville, near Sullivan Square, in 1842. For some 'captains of industry' in East Somerville work was only a short distance from the elevated terrain of Pearl Street to Washington Street.

One can gain a clear understanding of East Somerville's early street system by looking at the 1852 Draper Map. By that time the majority of the streets were already laid out between Mt. Pleasant Street on the east, Broadway on the north, East Somerville Walking Tour 2010: Historic Houses

Cross Street on the west, and Washington Street on the south. Small subdivisions incorporating two or three streets eventually were connected to other subdivisions, forming a street system that falls a bit shy of a unified grid pattern. Between Cross Street and the current McGrath and O'Brien Highway, East Somerville was almost completely devoid of buildings, with the exception of those bordering Washington Street.

In addition to proximity to Boston and public transportation, the topography of East Somerville promoted development. Here, level terrain perfect for house building was available in the area between Broadway and Pearl Street. Beyond Pearl Street, to the south, however, the land dropped off precipitously in the direction of Washington Street. This “drop off” served as a natural line of demarcation between the substantial residences north of Pearl Street and the more modest workers' cottages on the incline that sloped down to the industrial corridor bordering Washington Street. Beyond topography well-suited for house construction, East Somerville had fine soil for drainage as well as clay for brick and pottery-making. Indeed, industry in the area was located at the periphery—to the north in the Sullivan Square section of Charlestown, such as brewing, varnish-making, and manufacture of rubber products, and to the south, along or near Washington Street, one found for example, firms involved with brick-making, potteries, and spike manufacturing.

East Somerville retained its cachet as a fashionable place to live far longer than many neighborhoods in the Boston area. It remained an upscale residential quarter until the early 1900s. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some houses were subdivided, and three-deckers were built on the few undeveloped parcels.

This tour of East Somerville begins on Mt. Vernon Street which ranks among the oldest streets in the neighborhood. It is thought that street names such as Pinckney, Myrtle, Pearl and Franklin, as well as Mt. Vernon, were chosen to evoke streets of the same name in the Beacon Hill and old South End neighborhoods of Boston. During the early 1840s, Mt. Vernon Street, Mt. Pleasant Street and their adjacent house lots were platted on land that had been part of the Stearnes family farm. The Stearnes farmstead (since demolished) was located on Broadway, between Union and Austin Streets. This mid 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian house had a center hall plan, symmetrical five-bay main façade and a hipped roof from which two substantial chimneys rose. During the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Joshua Stearnes figured prominently as the owner of a distillery in Charlestown's Neck Village, now known as Sullivan Square.

The section of Mt. Vernon Street, between Broadway and Perkins Street, is “Greek Revival land” with many good examples of this distinctive architectural style dating back to the 1840's and early 1850's.

## Properties to Visit:

### 1. 16 Mt. Vernon Street

The Harrison M. Hutchins House (c.1850) is an excellent example of the end gable Greek Revival house type in Somerville. The placement of the front door at the three-bay main façade suggests a side hall interior plan. Still intact is the fluted Doric-columned front porch, which supports an entablature and a modified hipped roof. Still intact are original 6/6 double-hung windows, as well as typically Greek Revival corner boards and a pedimented attic. H. H. Hutchins, an early owner, was a “whitener” who worked for a Boston bleachery.

### 2. 84 Perkins Street

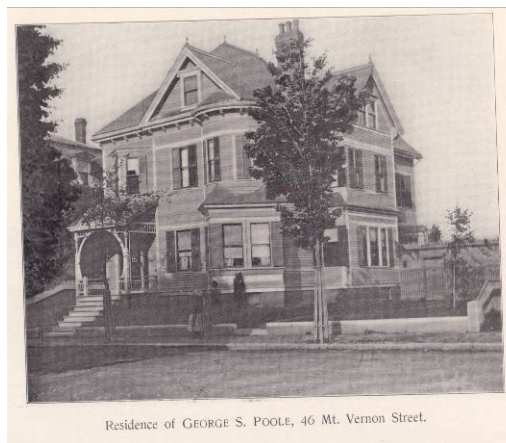
The small, 5-building Local Historic District (LHD) at Perkins and Mt. Vernon Street encompasses stylish and substantial examples of houses dating from the second half of the 19th century. 84 Perkins Street introduces a type of domestic architecture that is well represented in East Somerville—a substantial, well-proportioned Mansard residence. Noteworthy features include the heavy granite block foundation, intact porch posts, and original double doors. Charles A. Dole, a foreman for Stickley and Poor, Spice and Pickles of Charlestown, was the original owner of this house built in 1870-1871. The Doles family lived here until the early 1900s.

### 3. 46 Mt. Vernon Street

Built ca. 1885, 46 Mt. Vernon Street ranks among the best-detailed Queen Anne residences in Somerville. For many years this was the residence of George S. Poole, Secretary of the Warren Institute of Savings, a Boston bank..

### 4. 47 Mt. Vernon Street

47 Mt. Vernon Street provides evidence that as late as 1885, the Italianate style was alive and thriving in the eastern part of the City—saw cut bracketed elements held their appeal until well into the period when the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival Styles were rising in popularity. Here, round-arched windows, wooden brackets, and distinctive central pavilion massing remain intact and attest to the enduring appeal of the Italianate Style. The house’s first owner was Fred Coburn, a stationer.



## 5. 50 Mt. Vernon Street

This well-preserved residence blends the end gable form of the Queen Anne Style with Colonial Revival elements. It might be called the house that burlap built because its first owner, Thomas L. Davis, was a burlap dealer in Boston. Built in 1895, the house is noteworthy for its front porch complete with paired Doric columns, as well as the bold scroll brackets beneath the overhang of the gable.



## 6. 51 Mt. Vernon Street

Frederick Hosmer, a poultry dealer in the Faneuil Hall Market, hired an unidentified architect to design this house in 1892. It is a good example of a center hall Colonial Revival house, that provides evidence that East Somerville was still a fashionable address at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 7. 20 Wheeler Street

Built in 1899 on one of the few remaining undeveloped lots in the neighborhood, 20 Wheeler Street follows a unique “L” plan of three stories with a flat roof and an inset corner entrance facing Pinckney Street. The three-decker is a multi-family housing form that originated in Boston and Worcester almost



simultaneously around 1880. Typically, three-deckers possess rectangular forms with narrow facades facing streets and back yards. Full-blown three-deckers possess three-tiered porches at the narrow main and rear facades. They came into their own around 1890 as electric trolley lines reached heretofore-remote areas. Developers recognized that three-deckers were the perfect housing type to develop former farmland because so many of these long narrow structures could be built on vacant parcels. They also proved to be a cost efficient, yet aesthetically pleasing way to house the trolley commuters employed in urban centers as clerks, bank tellers, restaurant workers, and the like. The three-decker peaked in popularity in Boston neighborhoods around 1910 and ceased to be a type of multi-family housing built after 1930. The term ‘three-decker’ reportedly is rooted in nautical parlance, derived from the three-decks of a tall ship.

20 Wheeler Street represents the Colonial Revival Style, as seen in the paired Doric columns of the double entrance porch and the window lintel caps that overlap the belt courses between the stories. H. L. Littlefield developed this residential property. Its occupants in 1903 included a bookkeeper and a railroad conductor. By 1925, three married couples lived here, with the husbands employed as a clerk, a news dealer, and an engineer.

*From Wheeler Street we'll turn right onto Pinckney Street and proceed to 1 Arlington Street via Perkins Street.*

## 8. 1 Arlington Street.

Situated at the corner of Lincoln and Arlington Streets, the Nathan Tufts-Charles Williams Jr. House is noteworthy as an excellent example of the Italianate Style, as well as a house that holds an important place within the history of inventions that significantly shaped modern society. Built in 1858, this L-shaped house is composed of a generously proportioned main block and fairly extensive west ell. Both structural components were updated during the 1870s by the addition of Eastlake trim elements. Noted for its reliance on incised geometric design typically seen on porches, Eastlake Style was named after Charles Lock Eastlake, a British architectural critic and designer, who championed the use of hard edged, angular motifs primarily for furniture, and to a lesser extent for exterior architectural design.



FIRST HOUSE TO HAVE PERMANENT EXPERIMENTAL TELEPHONE SERVICE  
Residence of Charles Williams, Jr., at the corner of Arlington and Lincoln Streets, Somerville, in 1877. On April 4 of that year he opened the first outdoor telephone line, which connected his home with his electrical shop on Court Street, Boston.

The first owner, Nathan Tufts, was a member of one of Somerville's leading families. More typically associated with western Somerville, The Tufts family settled 'beyond the Neck' well before the Revolutionary War. Over time, they gained prominence as tavern keepers, farmers, brick manufacturers, pickle producers, and philanthropists.

Nathan Tufts sold 1 Arlington Street to Charles Williams Jr. in 1876. Apparently it was Williams who added Eastlake detail to the house. He was a manufacturer of telegraph instruments at 109 Court Street in Boston. Williams' shop was the venue in which Alexander Graham Bell experimented with the telephone. Indeed, this shop was where Bell and Thomas A. Watson heard the first telephonically transmitted sound on June 2, 1875. The Court Street shop was the location "in which all the Bell telephones were manufactured until the Williams' business was transferred to the Western Electric Company on July 2, 1883." Not only did Williams' shop figure significantly in the beginnings of this exciting

communications revolution, but his East Somerville residence did so as well. 1 Arlington Street has the distinction of being the first residence in the world to have permanent experimental telephone service connecting Williams's home with his shop in Boston. Williams had telephone numbers 1 and 2 of the Bell Telephone system.

Retracing our steps back down Lincoln Street, we'll turn right onto Perkins Street and left onto Florence Street. Northern Florence Street falls within the area bounded by Pearl, Pinckney, Perkins and Franklin Streets that were developed by Charles Pierce. In 1845 he hired surveyors to lay out 69 house lots within this rectangular area. Pierce let it be known that his new subdivision was "only 1090 feet from the depot, meaning the Boston and Lowell Train Station that was located near the intersection of Joy and Washington Streets. As was frequently the case with 1840s subdivisions in Somerville, house construction lagged for a decade or more within the Pierce subdivision.

### 9. 67 Florence Street

This early suburban house was built in 1857-1858 for merchant Isaac Hardy. The second owner, John Dalton, was a Boston book salesman. This house is a solid example of an Italianate end gable house that retains its original three-bay-by-four-bay main block and fairly substantial kitchen ell. Italianate elements are evident in the short return gable cornices and in the original porch posts with chamfered corners and saw cut bracing.



### 10. 75 Florence Street

Built right after the Civil War, 75 Florence Street was originally owned by Thomas J. Buffam, a Boston dry goods agent. He probably commuted to downtown Boston via the Broadway horse cars that became available in 1858.

75 Florence Street is an end gable Italianate house that rests on a brick foundation. The location of the front door suggests a side hall interior plan. Italianate features include the two-story polygonal bay and the return eaves of the gable roof. Originally open, the front porch was enclosed at an undetermined date and updated with Colonial Revival elements.



### 11. Pearl Street

Pearl Street was set out before 1852. Over time it evolved as a thoroughfare lined with some of the neighborhoods most stylish and substantial residences. **#32 Pearl**

was constructed in the Queen Anne style in 1887 for Charles Callahan. Characteristic of this style is the slate roof, patterned shingles, bracketed entry, and diamond-shape window in the stairwell. Until very recently, the southeast corner of Pearl and Florence Streets was the location of a circa 1870 Mansard residence built by Alonzo Bowers. To a great degree, the appearance of Pearl Street and its southern side streets was shaped by Bowers who had a fairly sophisticated understanding of siting and the proportions of house forms.

## 12. Florence Street Local Historic District: 39-43, 42-44, 45-47, 46-48 and 50-52 Florence Street

A combination of variable terrain and decidedly urbane architecture accounts for much of the interest in this area. The flat, elevated plane of Pearl Street quickly shifts to a steep hillside that descends to Washington Street. The Florence



Street properties constitute a kind of urban oasis

within a suburban housing context. Here, brick row houses that would look at home in Boston neighborhoods, rub elbows with wooden multi-family Queen Anne residences of unique design that were built during the period of 1870-1885. Bridge builder Herbert



Cole built the wooden apartments at 46-48 and 50-52 Florence Street. These multi-unit buildings are of considerable design interest for their rather unique steep front steps and especially their A-shaped, free-standing Queen Anne gables that contain raised sun-burst motifs.

## 13. 70 Pearl Street

Built during the early 1870s, 70 Pearl Street is another example of the type of substantial Mansard style residences that were built in East Somerville after the Civil War. Although covered with vinyl siding, its basic, well-proportioned form is still intact, along with features like the entrance porch, paired, two-story polygonal bays, and the saw cut brackets at the roof cornice.

The original owner, Captain Edmund Burke, lived here in retirement during the early 1870s. He had been a legendary ship captain who commanded tall ships that plied the waters of the Atlantic Ocean between Boston and the Portuguese islands known as the Azores. In 1865, while 900 miles off the coast of Boston, Captain Burke rescued the 320 people aboard the *Gratitude* which was taking on water and on the verge of sinking. In order to accommodate the leaking vessel's passengers

and crew members, Burke gave the order to throw thousands of boxes of oranges over board. Burke's over-crowded ship *Azor* returned to Boston, but not before the ship was strongly tossed about on stormy seas. Upon entering Boston Harbor, Captain Burke was given a hero's welcome by Mayor Lincoln. The cost of the lost cargo of oranges was compensated by local well-wishers.

70 Pearl Street provides evidence that Captain Burke prospered even though he only attended school for three days in his entire life. He was fond of saying that on his first day of school, the building was never opened to the students. On his second day, the teacher was sick, and the third day he played hooky, never to enter a classroom again.



#### 14. 53-55 Myrtle Street

Myrtle Street is of interest topographically for the way its path bends and descends dramatically just beyond the double cottages at 53-55 Myrtle Street and 57-59 Myrtle Street. These houses illustrate a modest house type characteristic of the streets located to the south of Pearl Street. At the bottom of this incline is the commercial/industrial Washington Street corridor. Together with Somerville Avenue, further to the west, this corridor comprised "Milk Row," a major artery for hauling farm produce and dairy products to the markets of Boston.



Built during the late 1850s, 53-55 and 57-59 Myrtle Street represents the center gable variety of the Italianate house. It has deep eaves at the side gables and lunette or half moon center gable windows. Center gable Italianate houses are located within virtually every neighborhood in the City, but rarely do they take the form of a double house. Both houses were built for Seth Stevens whose family lived at # 53-55 until the mid 1880s. By the early 1900s, # 53-55 was occupied by a Boston & Maine Railroad engineer who was among the many bread winners in the neighborhood who toiled on the trains, and later, the trolleys of the day.

*Before returning to Pearl, look down the hill at 37-39 Myrtle Street.*

Here, the Mansard Style is applied to a two-family that was built in 1870-1871 for an Irish family named Mully. One half of the house is in near original condition, while the other half is covered with vinyl siding. Original elements include the projecting oriel windows of the second story and the bracketed entry hood of the inset entrance. The house is enclosed by a straight-sided Mansard roof with lintel-capped dormers.



*Returning to Pearl Street we'll turn left onto Franklin Street and then right onto Flint Street.*

**15. Flint Street LHD: 12, 15-17, 16-18 and 22 Flint Street**

The Flint Street LHD to a great degree represents in microcosm, the rise of East Somerville as a fashionable neighborhood. Between the late 1850s and the mid-1880s, East Somerville came into its own as a place for families of means to establish their roots. Situated on relatively ample lots shaded by mature trees, Flint Street and its adjacent lots occupy the very edge of the ridge that dramatically descends to Washington Street.

**14 Flint Street** is an end wall Italianate house of the late 1850s that was built for a member of the prominent Davis family. During the late 19th century it was the residence of John F. Nickerson, a grocer. Italianate features include the short return gable cornice and most obviously, the round oculus window in the gable. The front door is flanked by sidelights that recall an earlier Greek Revival approach to entrance enframements, while the 6/6 double-hung wood sash may be original. The later circa 1920 entry portico nods to Colonial Revival influence.



**15-17 (together with #11-13) Flint Street** represent early double houses that impart a great deal of interest to Flint's northern streetscape. Here the horizontal emphasis is heightened by long rectangular forms, full length, columned porches, and the great march of twelve standard-sized second story windows. Built around 1860, even at that late date the Greek Revival Style was still being referenced in the side light entry doors and tight profiles of the side gables. While the early deeds to these properties mention owners named Whitman, Smith and Mather (occupations undetermined), it is known that #15-17 was occupied by masons during the early 1900s.

Built in 1883, **16-18 Flint Street** represents a last hurrah for the Mansard Style as the style of choice for substantial housing in East Somerville. As if the main block of the house was not commodious enough, additional interior space was added via two-story bay windows that project from either side of the main entrance and at the side walls. Indeed, bay windows not only provide a little additional space, but also permit more light to enter the interiors of this double house. The front porch strikes an up-to-date note, as seen in its turned Queen Anne porch elements.



The original owner was grocer John Nickerson who built the late 1850s Italianate next door. Reportedly, the house was promptly subdivided into multi-family housing for local workers whose job descriptions included clerk, driver, railroad brakeman, and carpenter.

## **22 Flint Street**

Built during the late 1850s, 22 Flint Street is an elaborate example of an end gable Italianate house. Bristling with brackets at the cornices of its encircling verandah and gables, this house also exhibits arched attic windows. The front doors appear to date to 1910 when the house's interior was transformed into a two-family residence.

The original owner was an Irishman named Patrick O'Connor. In 1864, Charles Davis, a Boston goods dealer purchased this house and then continued to live here until c.1890. By 1895, a Boston provisions dealer is listed at this address. Later occupants included a railroad engineer, bookkeeper and a laborer. By the 1940s an Italian family named Pallore lived here.

*From Flint Street head west and turn right on to Glen Street.*

On the left is a house that is well known for its elaborate holiday decorations—with more than a few of these festive ornaments remain on view all year long. From Glen Street turn right on to Pearl Street. The section of Pearl between Glen and Franklin Streets is noteworthy for the saw cut elements of its mid nineteenth century—some of which appear to be unique within the City of Somerville

## **16. 94 Pearl Street**

Retaining its still ample side yard, this substantial Mansard style house provides more evidence that East Somerville came into its own as a fashionable place to live after the Civil War. Here, the front door is sheltered by a robust saw cut door hood complete with bold, semi-circular brackets. This house almost certainly represents the work of master carpenter Alonzo Bowers who was active in Somerville building trades during the third quarter of the 19th century.



*Before heading north up Franklin Street, three side-by-side residences at 75, 77 and 81 Pearl Street illustrate saw cut Italianate elements for our viewing pleasure. Probably representing the work of the same builder, 77 Pearl Street, in particular, is noteworthy for the cushion capitals of its porch columns, elaborate label window moldings, as well as paired pendant brackets.*

*Franklin Street is the first of eleven rangeways in Somerville that were set out as early as the 1680s to provide access to the agricultural lands located between Washington Street/ Somerville Avenue and Broadway. Many of these rangeways were only rutted paths that were not improved as public roads until the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These rangeways were numbered—with Franklin Street numbered one. Further west, the rangeways were eventually named Cross, Walnut, School, Central, Lowell, Cedar, Willow, Curtis and North. Today, Franklin Street and the other rangeways are highly visible indications of the early agricultural land division pattern.*

### **17. 1 Webster Street, corner of Franklin Street**

Situated at the corner of Webster and Franklin Streets, 1 Webster Street ranks among the oldest houses in East Somerville. Built in 1851-1852, this house's first owner was John C. Edgerly a Boston grain dealer and prominent Somerville civic leader who is remembered for his years of service as head of the school committee. Edgerly's L-shaped house's Italianate characteristics are seen in the deep gable overhang and the heavy molded double doors of the side entrance. Striking a Greek Revival note are the fluted ionic columns of the encircling verandah. Representing a later, c.1900 addition is the large projecting oriel that rests atop part of the main façade's porch roof.



Later owners were also men of influence and means, including a Boston manager and a physician.

### **18. 8 Franklin Street**

Built in 1889-1890 for a Boston and Maine Railroad inspector and his family, 8 Franklin Street, at first glance appears to be Italianate by virtue of its rectangular, end gable massing and two-story polygonal bays at the main and south facades. In fact, this house represents an unusual, conservative approach to Queen Anne design. The entrance porch, of all of this house's features is the most Queen Anne aspect of the house as seen in its turned posts and the lovely fan motif carved in high relief at the center of the porch roof's pediment. The house's polygonal bays, while typically seen in Italianate design, in this case possess broad proportions that are more typical of Queen Anne bay windows. The present owner has done a fine job of returning this house to its original glory and indeed has provided the community with a wonderful example of how historic preservation can make a positive difference in the appearance of neighborhood streetscapes.

*From 8 Franklin Street we'll walk a short distance to Broadway. Set out as early as the 1630s to link Charlestown with Medford, Broadway has been the principal commercial thoroughfare for East Somerville since the mid 1800s. Perhaps Broadway's greatest claim to fame is the fact that it was part of the route Paul Revere followed to make his famous ride to Lexington on April 18, 1775. Reliable public transportation in the form of horse-drawn trolleys were introduced to Broadway during the 1850s to facilitate the commutes of Somerville businessmen to jobs in downtown Boston. The current appearance of Broadway is that of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century main street complete with handsome masonry commercial buildings, a distinctive Classical Revival public library and a red brick former fire station that has been adapted for reuse as a senior center.*

North of Broadway, an elongated rise variously called High Field, Mt. Benedict and Nunnery Hill dominated the landscape until it was leveled during the late nineteenth century. Just to the north of Mt. Benedict, the old Middlesex Canal (completed in 1803) neared its southern terminus in the Sullivan Square area of Charlestown. The Canal age ended around 1840s as the railroad became the public transportation mode of choice for moving people and products. Undoubtedly the most notorious chapter in the history of East Somerville, north of Broadway, was the destruction of the Ursuline Convent in 1834. In this case ignorance and bigotry trumped reason and decency when an angry mob of Protestant locals stormed the hill top convent in an effort to cast out Catholic nuns who were rumored to be filling their students' minds with immoral and anti-American teachings. Luckily the nuns and the young Unitarian ladies who were their students had enough warning to escape from the ensuing chaos unscathed but the incident was a low point in Boston area Protestant-Catholic relations that took decades to overcome. By the mid 1800s brick yards were key components within the landscape north of Broadway, explaining, in part why residential development did not unfold in any comprehensive manner until as late as the World War I era when two-families were built in great numbers along streets named for American states.

*As we walk westward from Franklin Street and Broadway to our final stop at Mud Flats, we'll consider several outstanding examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century design.*

## **19. Columbia Building**

Situated at 84-86 Broadway, the yellow brick Columbia Building was constructed in 1902 by the Columbia Associates, a fraternal organization composed of 50 members whose president was J. S. Newcomb, a Somerville realtor. Designed in the Colonial Revival Style by E.L. Clark it was built to house 5 stores on the ground

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floor with a club room, club offices and other club-related rooms on the second floor. That the building was laid up in yellow brick is interesting because it shows that the vogue for lighter-hued bricks had reached Somerville by the early 1900s. The monochromatic, gleaming white Boston Public Library by McKim Mead and White of 1888-1896 is a prime example of this sea change in American design. Building materials other than dark red brick or brownstone began to figure significantly in the construction of American public buildings after the Chicago World's Fair or Columbian exposition of 1893. Dubbed "the white City" because all of its pavilions were constructed of building materials the appearance of the Fair had a profound effect on architects and other tastemakers of the day.

The Columbia Building's commercial concerns during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century included a real estate company, drug store, beauty shop, dentist, etc. Other fraternal organizations that used this building included the Paul Revere Lodge, Home Circle and Knights of Honor.

## 20. Franklin Building

Built in 1919 from designs provided by an unknown architect, the Franklin Building is a brick and concrete commercial building with stylistic references to the Classical Revival as well as elements that anticipate the Art Deco style. Originally this building was associated with banking—more specifically with the Winter Hill Cooperative Bank and the Somerville Institute for Savings.



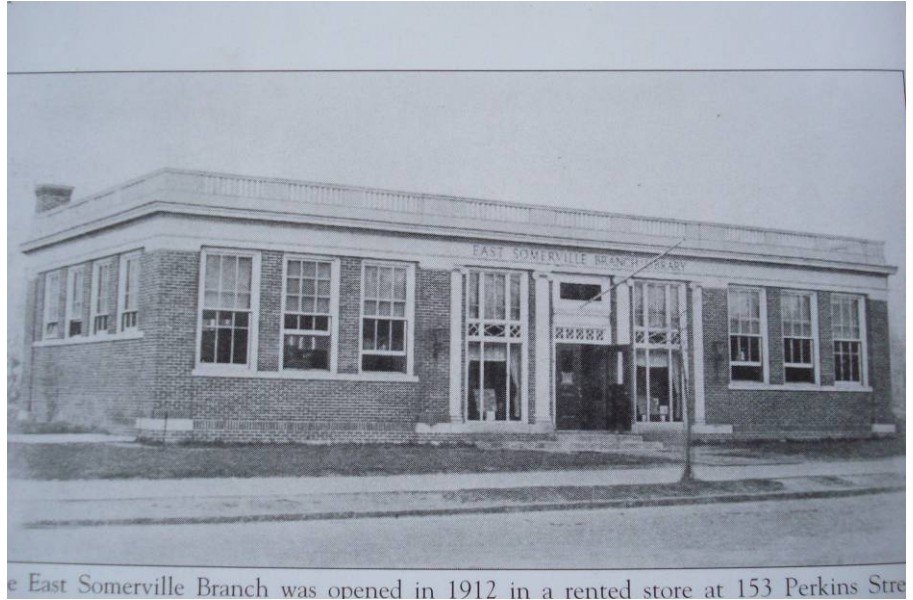
## 21. Hurst's Broadway Theatre

Located at 79-83 Broadway, the former Hurst's Broadway Theatre was built in 1915. By the late 1920s, Somerville had six theatres—today only one is still in operation as a theatrical venue at the Somerville Theatre in Davis Square. Hurst's was built for the Star Theatres Incorporated by the Somerville Home Building association. The theatre had a capacity for 1,850 and continued to be in operation until the late 1940s. In 1933, Arthur N. Viano, who built the Teele Square Theatre owned the Broadway under the name of "Viano's Broadway" The theatre was located behind a façade of storefronts—an arrangement that was then fairly typical.



## 22. East Somerville Branch Library, Broadway, at corner of Illinois Street.

Built in 1918, the East Somerville Branch Library is a satellite of the Central Library atop Central Hill. Somerville's public Library system began 1871, the year Somerville was incorporated as a city. The East Somerville Library was organized in 1912 in commercial space located at 153 Perkins Street. The more formal establishment of the East Somerville Branch Library was linked to the explosive residential



growth that occurred during the World War I era. Here, two-family houses were built in great numbers along streets named for American states. The establishment of this library may also be seen as a by-product of the early Automobile Age when people began to rely on cars to perform errands such as dropping off library books combined with quick stops to stores. Architecturally, this library is noteworthy for the simplicity of its rectangular masonry form as well as for the Classical Revival ornamentation that includes Ionic and Doric pilasters and a heavy entablature below the flat roof's cornice.

The East Somerville Branch Library's building has the distinction of having been funded by Pittsburgh, PA steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. A native of Scotland, Carnegie funded hundreds of libraries in great Britain and across the United States during the period of 1895-1930. Carnegie attributed his success in business to his early access to the private library of a wealthy family in his home town.

### 149 Broadway—Mudflat Studios

Organized in East Cambridge in 1971, Mudflat is a non profit organization dedicated to providing the facilities and instruction necessary for adults and children to produce pottery. During our visit—the last stop on the tour—we will view the kiln as well as the ceramics of the students. Mudflats is an important community resource that draws people from the greater Boston area to its classes.

Thank you for participating on this tour! Should you need additional information, contact the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, via [www.somervillema.gov/historicpreservation](http://www.somervillema.gov/historicpreservation) or 617-625-6600, extension 2525.