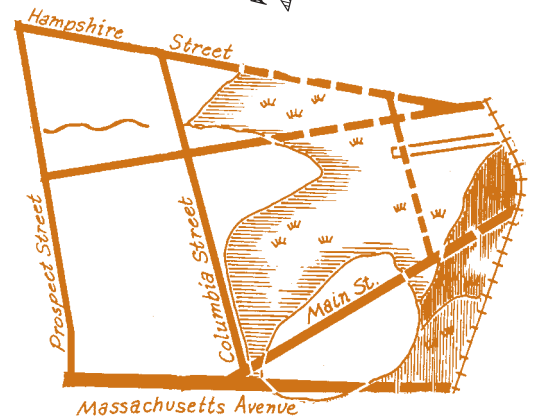


# 4word

area 4 newsletter



Special Edition

4word Number 18

January 2004

## Area 4—A Neighborhood with a Long History of Innovation and Leadership

One of the challenges facing today's neighborhood residents, especially young people, is how to continue a long history of local industrial and commercial leadership and innovation. What will be the innovations and industries of the future? Will we be prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead? Does everyone have an equal opportunity to excel? Today we have a vast bio-tech and high-tech industry on our doorstep, and endless opportunities at the cutting edge of information, technology, and science. Will we all have access to those opportunities?

### Invention of the Sewing Machine

When you walk down Cherry Street today you can no longer hear the sewing machine at 55 Cherry Street, or see Elias Howe Jr. bent over his worktable developing the first sewing machine. In 1845 he created a machine that sewed 250 stitches a minute, and when he was able to sew two suits of clothes at his residence on



*George Close Company, Confectioner*

Photo from *Cambridgeport—Busy and Beautiful*.  
Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission

Cherry Street, he knew he had finally perfected the first sewing machine. He later established a workshop at 740 Main Street. He received a patent for his machine on September 10, 1846. Unfortunately, Howe was ahead of his time. He traveled to England to market his machine but, short on money, he pawned his earliest sewing machine model and

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## The Early History of Area 4

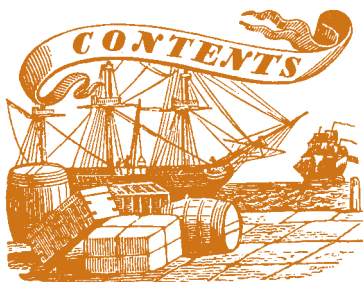
### 1630–1793

#### Farms, Swamps, and Marshes

Cambridge was originally named Newtowne when it was founded in 1630. The new settlement, meant to be the permanent capital for Puritan leaders of the Bay Colony, remained the capital until 1634. It was said that the first commercial business was a tavern, licensed to sell beer and bread, located in Old Cambridge (in the area of Harvard Square). Until the early 1800s, the population remained largely Yankee, middle class, and protestant, and Old Cambridge had political supremacy in the town.

Cambridgeport (land including Area 4, Area 3, and the current Cambridgeport neighborhood), was low-lying, partially wooded, and bordered by swamps and marshes. Throughout the first century of settlement, Area 4 was primarily agricultural, valued for pasture, salt hay, and oysters. Pelham's Island, twenty acres along Main Street east of Lafayette Square

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## Area 4 Innovations

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patent and returned home. On his return to Cambridge in 1849 he discovered that many machinists had copied his earliest design. In particular, Isaac M. Singer had profited from Howe's design. In 1856, ten years after Howe's initial patent, a patent trial ended successfully and Howe received a royalty for each sewing machine sold. This Area 4 resident of Cherry Street had invented a machine that became basic to American life.



*Squirrel Brand Nut Chews logo*

### World Leader in the Candy Industry

The manufacture of candy in Cambridge was begun by Robert Douglass in 1826, in a small building on Windsor Street. He moved soon after to a building on Douglass street. In 1848, B. P. Clark, a salesman for Robert Douglass, started a candy business in Area 4 and built a factory at 443 Massachusetts Avenue in 1874. Royal Douglas began making confections in 1826 on Massachusetts Avenue. Later his firm was joined by those of Isaac Lum at Broadway and Hampshire Street and Jeremiah Withal on Essex Street. George Close erected a building in 1879 on the corner of Broadway and Windsor Street, where he employed 125 people to produce candy. D. M. Hazen and Company began business in 1876. In 1882 it purchased 5,600 feet of land and a two-story building, located at 42 Elm Street. In 1890 more land was purchased and the building increased to three stories high. Hazen employed 100 people to make a specialty of chocolates, bonbons, and caramels. H. F. Sparrow began his business in 1887, in a two-story building on Windsor Street, and in 1891 he erected a factory on the corner of Hampshire and

Clark Streets. The Imperial Chocolate Company, the manufacturers of Empress Chocolates, was located at 62 Hampshire Street and 182–192 Clark Street. It employed 175 people. The Bay State Confectionery Company employed over 60 people at its plant at 141 Hampshire Street. The Russell Candy Company, located at 253 Norfolk Street, ceased operations in the 1930s, and the building was demolished in 1993.

Cambridge and Boston were once considered the hub of the candy industry in the United States. Boston was a major port for sugar, molasses, and cocoa beans, and sugar refineries such as the Revere Sugar Company and Domino fed the area's candy factories. Until recently three candy companies remained in or near Area 4. NECCO (New England Confectionery Company), which was famous for its coin-shaped wafers and for its Valentine's Day hearts with messages; Squirrel Brand Company, which made the Squirrel Nut Zipper as well as other treats; and Cambridge Brands Inc.

Last year NECCO ceased operations in Cambridge and consolidated their plants in Revere. NECCO was the country's largest candy company when it opened in 1927 on Massachusetts Avenue. Its building, which was the largest candy manufacturing plant in the world, is being converted to a 500,000-square-foot biotech development.

The Squirrel Brand factory on Boardman Street has been converted into affordable housing and its land on the corner of Broadway and Boardman Street features the continuation of community gardens and a new park scheduled for completion in summer 2004. The Broadway Baptist Church was once located on the corner of Broadway and Boardman Street. The foundation of the church, which was demolished in 1972, remains buried under the current community gardens. The original



*Former Squirrel Brand factory, Broadway and Boardman Street*

Photo by Gerald Bergman



*253 Norfolk Street, Russell's Chocolates*

Photo from *The Cambridge Easter Magazine*, 1914.  
Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission



*Junior Mints, a product of Cambridge Brands in Area 4*

Broadway Baptist Church of 1866 was damaged by fire in 1889, and was rebuilt in a typical Queen Anne fashion. The church was abandoned by the congregation in 1966, and the building was subsequently used by the Salvation Army as a community center.

Cambridge Brands Inc., located at 810 Main Street, is the only candy manufacturing plant remaining in Cambridge. About 200 employees, many of whom are Portuguese and Central American immigrants, carry on

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*Curtis Davis and Company (later Lever Brothers) had its soap factory on the large expanse of land that now includes the Garment District used-clothing store and Draper Laboratories. One of their products was Welcome brand soap, a handshake was its trademark. Wagons filled with Welcome soap traveling down Broadway, selling soap to residents, were a common sight in Area 4. The George Page Box Company is in the background, Hampshire and Broadway Street, 1889.*

Photo courtesy of Curtis Mellen Collection from the Cambridge Historical Commission



*Kimball and Davenport, Cambridgeport, Massachusetts. Original Davenport Car Works, rear of 579-587 Massachusetts Avenue, 1832-1842*

Photo courtesy of Mrs. H. D. Winslow.  
Cambridge Historical Commission

the candy tradition started by brothers Jim and Robert Welsh in 1925. Cambridge Brands, a subsidiary of Tootsie Roll Industries, makes Junior Mints; Sugar Daddy, the old-fashioned, rectangular caramel pop wrapped in yellow paper; Sugar Babies, a soft caramel; and Charleston Chew, a nougat bar covered with chocolate. According to the company, Cambridge Brands produces approximately 14 million boxes of Junior Mints and 13 million Charleston Chew bars daily through a process that is almost entirely automated. Halloween accounts for more than one-third of Tootsie Roll Industries net sales for the year. Did someone in your family collect a treat made right here in Area 4?

### Instant Photography

Edwin Land founded the Polaroid Corporation in 1937. When he received his 500th patent in 1977, Land was inducted into the Inventors Hall of Fame by the U.S. Patent Office. In 1946 Land introduced instant film for photography. That year he had his picture taken on the corner of Osborn Street with his new camera, and by 1948 the first instant camera was marketed. He often took photos of residents at Newtowne Court to test his new camera. Working out of his lab off Main Street in Area 4, Land introduced totally instant film in 1970. According to Land, "invention must be something startling, unexpected, and must come to a world that is not prepared for it."

### Invention of the Center-Aisle Railroad Car

Charles Davenport, working out of a building on Massachusetts Avenue from 1832-1842, where the Cambridge Harvest Co-op Market now stands, developed the first center-aisle railroad cars, which were the first modern railway passenger cars. The building behind 579-587 Massachusetts Avenue contained Davenport's first railway car assembly line. In 1842 the company moved to Main and Osborn Streets where it continued until 1857. Here he added doors and platforms at both ends of the cars. In 1846 Davenport was one of the incorporators of the Grand Junction Railroad, whose tracks form the eastern edge of Area 4.

### Soap Factories

The business of making soap began in Area 4 in a building off Main Street. Soap making was perhaps the only industry practiced on a large scale during this period. In 1804 Nathaniel Livermore set up a factory on Main Street near Columbia Street as the company of Livermore, Crane, and Whitney. The Davis family had established its leadership in the industry in the 1830s, going on to make soap a staple. In 1835 Curtis Davis began to manufacture soap in a factory at the corner of Broadway and Davis Street. In 1840 Isaac Davis set up a soap factory just across the street, and Eliphale Davis

followed suit at Main and Windsor Streets.

By the 1880s, the company had 125 different products on the market, and in 1883, Davis began his promotion of Welcome Soap. In 1898 Lever Brothers took over Curtis Davis and Company, and maintained a factory there until the 1950s, by which time it had become one of the largest soap companies in the world. Whenever you use Dove, Caress, Shield, and other Lever Brothers soaps, you are continuing a tradition begun 200 years ago in Area 4.

### The First Telephone Conversation

The first successful telephone conversation between two widely separated points occurred between an office in Area 4 and an office in the city of Boston. On the corner of Osborn and Main Streets, at the site of the Charles Davenport railway car plant, is a bronze plaque commemorating the first reciprocal telephone conversation. This conversation took place between Thomas Watson in Cambridge and the telephone's inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, on October 9, 1876.

(Information was taken principally from *Cambridge on the Cutting Edge/Innovators and Inventions*, a publication of the Cambridge Historical Society, and *Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Cambridgeport*, by the Cambridge Historical Commission, 1971.)



## Early Days at Newtowne Court— A Conversation with Jane Richards

**W**e moved into Newtowne Court, door 30, apartment 265, in 1938 when I was one year old. We were among the first families to move in. There were seven of us, five children, two sets of twin girls and a single boy. Newtowne Court was a new concept in low-income housing. Before Newtowne Court we were living in a cold water flat. Our new home had three bedrooms and one bathroom. When we moved out in 1955 there were seven children, five girls and two boys. It is comical when I hear how families today need more bathrooms for their small families.

I felt I had 527 playmates, the number of children in Newtowne Court! Most of the kids in the Court used the Margaret Fuller House (MFH), and Washington Elms kids tended to use the Neighborhood House. The MFH was straight across Windsor Street and one block over on Cherry Street. We used their outdoor play space, the gym, and attended dancing, music, and sewing classes. My sister Betty and I went to the MFH Camp Newton.

Every Wednesday, in the summer, at the Neighborhood House they showed movies. We brought a box or small chair, carried it across Washington Street, through the Elms, and over to the yard at the Neighborhood House. The evening would start with a serial like *Zorro* and cartoons, and when it got dark, the main feature would come on.



*In front of the Margaret Fuller House, 1949*

Courtesy of the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

When it was over we went back carrying our chairs and boxes.

One evening while walking through the Court I saw that someone had a blue light in their room and I could see a screen through their window. This family had a magnifying screen in front of the TV screen because it was so small. Sometime later I was able to twist the windows open in my apartment in such a way as to see the reflection of the TV next door in my window. We would watch the Dinah Shore show in the reflection and we argued as to who could sit by the window. When the mother next door got wind of it, she moved the TV. We did not get a TV until we moved in 1955.

We would go up on the roof of Newtowne Court with our beach towels and our radios. On a rainy day we could go through our continuous cellar, from one side of the Court to the other. The laundry was in the basement, and we played down there. There were bins and each tenant had a bin to hang their clothes. The big outdoor area we loved was in front of the gym with two showerheads in the summer. In the winter they froze it and people went ice skating. In the gym we would have a huge Halloween party every year.

My mother was from Ireland but her neighbors were American born. There was such a support for women and especially mothers.

During war time women helped each other, food and clothes were shared. People helped each other with sewing. We did not have a car until we moved out in 1955. Most of the men and women walked to their jobs. My father worked in One Kendall Square for a trucking company. My mother worked as a cook for wealthy families on Brattle Street. The man across the hall worked on Main Street in an auto dealership. Another man worked in a candy factory on Main Street. Several neighbors worked in Ward's bakery behind Central



*Jane Richards (r) and her twin sister Betty Sheerin (l) in 1942 at Newtowne Court*

Courtesy of Jane Richards

Square. Everyone knew their courtyard. Because we did not have cars, people came to the house to sell things. People came door to door to sell linens, dishtowels, Fuller brushes, and big bottles of bleach.

We went to Gordon's Central Square Theater. I saw Ted Williams there. Because we did not have TV that was where people would go. I remember seeing *Song of the South*. During the war years we could get into the movies for free if we collected metal for the war effort. We would hear the air raid sirens. My neighbor wore a white air-raid warden's hat and she would go door to door telling us to turn off the lights in order to protect us from enemy planes bombing the Court. We got a ration book of stamps for buying food. We would go to Paul's, which is still there, on the corner of School and Windsor Streets.

People working for Polaroid came across the street dressed in their white coats asking to take pictures. Edwin Land may even have come over to take our pictures when he was working on the Instamatic camera. We went to Jimmy's and the Malowitz Market. There were many small grocery stores serving the Elms and the Court.

Kids went to Catholic schools and to the Maynard school. We were members of St. Mary's Parish even after leaving the Court. In the '60s, when I was a young mother with kids, I fought to stop the Inner Belt which would have come down Norfolk Street and torn the parish apart. Father Paul McManus helped lead the group that

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## Jane Richards

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fought it. There is a mural on Magazine Street in Cambridgeport depicting the people stopping the shovel. The mural means people power! It is history. People can be successful in fighting big powers.

Over time the population in the Court changed. There were more single-parent families, more mothers raising kids alone. Growing up, I knew one person on welfare. In later years there were terrible and unfair stereotypical images of the development. This was not the case when I was growing up. It is not fair to those who live there now.

My real philosophy is that public housing should be on every street. There should be no segregation. Subsidized housing should be mixed with all other housing. The goal should be to have low-income housing on every street of every city. We should live



**Bernard LaCasse's "Beat the Belt" mural, Magazine Street**

Courtesy of Gerald Bergman

with people of all incomes and blend in as neighbors, not be segregated as low-income people living in this special place.

I have four children and five grandchildren and one on the way. My two daughters want to live in Cambridge but it is too expensive. One daughter now lives with us but wants her own household. The loss of rent control has been devastating to the city.

We are the fourth generation on my street. It is a sad indictment when we make the city attractive for those with money while so many others cannot afford to live here. I would hate to have to leave Cambridge, especially as I get older.

(This article is based on conversations between the *4word* editor and Jane Richards in November 2003.)

## Looking Back at Gordon's Central Square Theater

“Never until Monday night at the new Central Square theatre were 2,200 people gathered together indoors in Cambridge” (*Cambridge Chronicle* 3/22/1919). Some long-term residents of Area 4 will remember the 1919 opening of Gordon's Theater, located at 571–575 Massachusetts Avenue. Its crowning feature was the organ specially designed for the theater by Mr. Gordon, the first man in the world to place organs in motion picture theaters. The theater was designed in 1917 by William Mowll, who also designed the Squirrel Brand Candy factory.

“The genius of Rex Beach was never more compellingly demonstrated than in *The Brand*, the first night feature picture, widely known because of the thrilling nature of the story...The remainder of the program is also of stirring excellence with Arthur Martell presiding at the wonderful organ, assisted by an orchestra under his direction, followed by an exceptional bill of vaudeville, the Pathe News Pictorial and a travel picture completing the bill” (*Chronicle* 3/15/1919).

Gordon's Central Square Theater, at one time one of three theaters in Central Square, took three years to construct. Designed as a vaudeville house, it contained a stage, an orchestra pit, an organ, dressing rooms, and a flytower for scenery, as well as a movie screen. The theater extended back to Bishop Allen Drive and Norfolk Street, and was a major Central Square landmark until about 1960 when it was taken down to build the present public parking lot.

The building that now houses Libby Liquors and the Shalimar Indian market originally contained the theater lobby. The introduction of a marquee in 1927 and later storefront alterations obscured the entire facade below the second floor windowsills. With assistance from the Historical Commission under a grant from the Community Development Department to upgrade storefronts on Massachusetts Avenue, a portion of the original facade was restored.



**Gordon's Central Square Theater**

Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission, Ida DeMarco



**The interior of the Central Square Theater, which had 2,120 seats**

Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission, Ida DeMarco

## African American Heritage Trail in Area 4



**Clement G. Morgan**

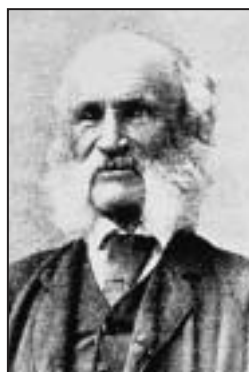
Cambridge Public Library collection, Cambridge Historical Commission

named after an African American. Morgan's marker on the Cambridge African American Heritage Trail is at 265 Prospect Street.

### **Clement G. Morgan, 1859–1929**

Clement Garnett Morgan was the first African American elected to the Cambridge City Council (known as the Board of Alderman), in 1897. With his Harvard classmate and friend W. E. B. DuBois, he was a founder of the Niagara Movement, a predecessor of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Clement Morgan first lived on Columbia Street and in 1898 moved to Prospect Street. On Sunday, October 19, 2003, Columbia Street Park (Columbia and Washington Streets) was renamed the Clement G. Morgan Park. This was the first park in Cambridge

School. The 196 Prospect Street Maria Baldwin House is on the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project Women's Historical Walking Tour of Central Square. (For more information on this project contact Mary Leno: Project Coordinator, Cambridge Women's Commission, at 617-349-4697.)



**Milton (?) Clarke**

Photo from *Colored American*, vol. 6, 1903

### **J. Milton Clarke, 1820–1902, and Lewis Clarke, 1818–1897**

Lewis and John Milton Clarke were among the many contributors to the antislavery movement in Cambridge. They escaped to Ohio and arrived in Cambridge in 1843. Harriet Beecher Stowe based George Harris, a character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, on Lewis. Milton lived on Norfolk Street and Florence Place from 1851 until he died. He was the first African American elected to public office in Cambridge. Their Heritage Trail marker is located at 2 Florence Place.



**Charlotte Hawkins Brown**

Cambridge Public Library collection, Cambridge Historical Commission

### **Charlotte Hawkins Brown, 1883–1961**

Charlotte Hawkins Brown was the founder of the Palmer Memorial Institute, a private preparatory school for African American children in Sedalia, North Carolina. Her family moved to Clark Street in 1890 and to 55 Essex Street in 1901. She started a Sunday-school kindergarten at the Union Baptist Church on Main Street. As her school grew more famous, Brown traveled widely to speak on behalf of African American education and civil rights. Her Heritage Trail marker is located at 55 Essex Street.

### **Joshua Bowen Smith, 1813–1879**

Joshua Bowen Smith, an abolitionist and state representative, was one of the best-known public figures of his day. As a caterer, he employed fugitive slaves while he kept a watchful eye on the movements of bounty hunters. A member of the Boston Vigilance Committee, Smith was active in fugitive slave cases. He was elected to the state legislature in 1873 and 1874. He purchased the house at 79 Norfolk Street in 1852, the site of his Heritage Trail marker.



**Joshua Bowen Smith marker**

Photo by Gerald Bergman

### **Maria Baldwin, 1856–1922**

Maria Louise Baldwin was the headmistress of the Agassiz Grammar School (recently renamed the Baldwin School) in Cambridge. Her father, an immigrant from Haiti, settled the family first on Washington Street and then on Clark Street. Baldwin held home-study classes for African Americans in her house at 196 Prospect Street. Baldwin helped found the League of Women for Community Service and was its president for several years. Her Heritage Trail marker, originally at 196 Prospect Street, is now at 32 Sacramento Street, the site of the Baldwin

(Information has been taken directly from the Cambridge African American Heritage Trail guide. The guide, which is published by the Cambridge Historical Commission, discusses all 20 of the trail marker sites in Cambridge as well as a brief history of African Americans in Cambridge. To purchase a copy of the guide, please contact the Cambridge Historical Commission at 617-349-4683.)



**Maria Baldwin**

Cambridge Public Library collection, Cambridge Historical Commission



## Area 4 Public Schools

In 1802 the first Area 4 public school was built at the corner of Windsor and School Streets. This one-room wooden schoolhouse became known as the Boardman School. It lasted until 1868, when it was replaced by the present building, built of brick on a plan of four corner classrooms on each floor. Although the building is no longer used as a school, it is the oldest surviving school building in the city. The lot was donated by Andrew Bordman whose name (spelled slightly differently) the building bears.

The Harvard Schoolhouse, which was located on Harvard Street opposite Essex Street, was built in 1843. When a new Harvard School was opened at the corner of Inman Street and Broadway in 1871 (now the City Hall Annex), the Harvard Schoolhouse was renamed the Stearns School. This site eventually gave way to a playground in Sennott Park and later to the Area 4 Youth Center.

In 1838 the term “high school” first appeared in the language of the Cambridge public schools. The rapidly increasing population of East Cambridge (called Lechmere’s Point in 1838) and Cambridgeport led to the establishment of the first Cambridge high school (commonly called a classical school) at the southwest corner of Windsor and Broadway. This was a two-story building, 70 by 38 feet. It cost Cambridge \$5,791.05, including land. The idea



**Cambridge’s oldest surviving public school building, the Boardman School, built in 1868**

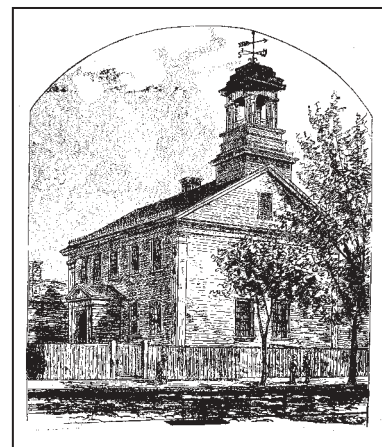
Photo by Gerald Bergman

of one high school to serve the entire city was not successful because people from the differing communities of Old Cambridge and East Cambridge objected to sending children to one location.

In 1843 the high school building became a grammar school known as the Broadway School (later the Sargent School). The building was demolished in 1916.

In 1899 the first Roberts School was completed on the corner of Harvard and Windsor Streets only to be rebuilt in 1929. The second Roberts School also incorporated the site of the first high school. The Roberts School was later called the Maynard School after school committee member Joseph Maynard and, since the recent merger of the Fletcher and Maynard School communities, is now known as the New Fletcher Maynard Academy. The original name came from Benjamin W. Roberts, the veteran principal of the Allston school.

The Allston School was established in 1859 and was located at the site of the former Squirrel Brand factory (now affordable rental housing) on Boardman Street. In the January 30, 1858, *Cambridge Chronicle*, the Allston school was described as the best-planned school in the city of Cambridge and well worth the considerable price of \$24,000. The Allston school housed nearly 600 students. It burned in 1901 and in 1916 the site began to be used by the Squirrel Brand Company.



**First high school in Cambridge**

Cambridge Planning Board Collection,  
Cambridge Historical Commission



**First Roberts School, Harvard and Windsor Streets**

Cambridge annual documents 1899,  
Cambridge Historical Commission

As a replacement for the Allston School, in 1902 the City made an appropriation of \$11,000 to purchase 24,000 square feet of property from Thurston, Hall and Company, the manufacturer of crackers, ginger snaps, and other kinds of cookies, for a new school at the intersection of Elm and Market Streets. In 1903 a permit was granted for the construction of a three-and-one-half story school at a construction cost of \$58,000. The Fletcher School is the only turn-of-the-century Area 4 school still in use. Now the Cambridgeport School, it was originally named in honor of Ruel Hasseltine Fletcher, a Cambridge educator who was at that time the headmaster of the Thorndike School after serving for four years at the Otis School in East Cambridge. Ruel Hasseltine Fletcher began teaching in Cambridge in 1857 and retired in 1910 at the age of 80 never having taught at the Fletcher School. The school and neighborhood recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Fletcher School building.



**Thurston, Hall and Company, site of the former Fletcher School now the Cambridgeport School**

Photocopy courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

## A Conversation with Suzanne Revaleon Green

*Suzanne Revaleon Green is a lifelong resident of Worcester Street. In September 2002, when she celebrated her 90th birthday, she received the key to the City of Cambridge. This past April she finished compiling a booklet entitled African-American Women—Firsts, a celebration in photos and descriptions of the accomplishments of Black women in the history of the United States. She is a member of the Cambridge African American Heritage Trail committee and the Cambridge Historical Commission. The Revaleon family is highlighted in Frank Dorman's book, The Twenty Families of Color in Massachusetts, 1742–1998.*

The involvement of the Revaleon family in the fight for racial freedom in the United States may have begun when my grandfather Albert Leroy Revaleon enlisted to serve in the 55th regiment in the Civil War. During the Civil War African American men enlisted in the 54th regiment, but so many wanted to enlist with the North in the fight for freedom that the 55th regiment was formed.

My father's mother, Charlotte Belden Revaleon, was one of five children born to James Belden, an Indian scout of the Nipmuc tribe in Northfield, Massachusetts. They lived there until the State of Massachusetts seized that Indian territory without giving any compensation to the Native Americans.



*Manhattan Market, 1907  
(Now Tello's, Wendy's, Supreme Liquors)*

Courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

My maternal grandmother, Susie Maduro, lived on Washington Street where many African Americans lived in the mid- and late 1800s. They were members of St. Paul A.M.E. Church, which was located in the area that was torn down to build Washington Elms and Newtowne Court in the 1930s. Her husband, Francis, died not long after their marriage, and her second husband, Horace Stevens, bought her the house at 9 Worcester Street in the 1880s as a wedding present. The house had a barn in back where he kept his horse and wagon for his fruit and vegetable business. He also had a store on Main Street near Windsor Street, where he sold rice, beans, and flour from barrels. He added the charges on a brown paper bag before ringing up the sales on the big brass cash register.

In 1911 my parents, James Albert Revaleon and Ruby Higginbotham, were married and moved into their apartment at 16 Worcester Street. My father worked in positions beneath his ability and for low wages. He was not welcome in the white Masons' programs, so he started a Masonic Lodge for young African Americans in 1937. When I was in the fifth grade at the Fletcher School we moved back to 9 Worcester Street, where I lived with my grandmother, father, and brother. I've lived here ever since. Five generations of my family have lived in this house.

I remember looking out the front window and seeing the lamp lighter coming by on his bicycle. Trees used to line the street. There were families of many races and religions. At one time there was an owner living in every house. A retired Irish carpenter helped us build a playhouse on the side lot of our house when we lived at 16 Worcester Street. The ice man regularly brought in a huge piece of ice and put it in the ice box. He could tell the size of the piece you wanted based on the way a card was placed in the window, a 15



*Suzanne Revaleon Green outside her home on Worcester Street*

Photo provided by Suzanne Green

cent piece or a 25 cent piece. Ice would come from Fresh Pond.

I always wanted to be a teacher, and I used to play as a teacher in the backyard at 16 Worcester Street. When I started school in 1918, the Fletcher School was without electricity. We didn't do much on a really dark day. In 1926 I graduated at the top of my class but, because I was Black, I was not included in the graduation ceremony. My father complained, and I was eventually allowed to take the stage and give a short speech.

I belonged to the Cambridge Neighborhood House which was located on Moore and Harvard Streets. As a youngster, I was more active in the Margaret Fuller House. I took piano lessons at the House, and our recitals were held at the YWCA. I also played piano for folk dancing classes and a play group on Saturday mornings, earning 25 cents an hour. I would say that was the beginning of my teaching career. After Cambridge High and Latin School, I attended the State Teachers College in Salem. I graduated in 1933.

Other Cambridge African American girls ("colored" as we were called) who were finishing teachers colleges were not welcome to teach in the city's schools. They were encouraged to go South to "work with their people." Many of the girls did go South, but I stayed here and became

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## Suzanne Revaleon Green

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the seventh African American teacher in Cambridge after Maria Baldwin. I wanted to stay in Cambridge and work with “my people” who were *all* the people.

In 1937, I was appointed to the Houghton School [now the Martin Luther King School]. After five years of teaching, I decided to get married. In 1942, married women were not allowed to teach. Before I could turn in my resignation, I found myself fired along with two other women, one of them Irish Catholic and the other Jewish. My husband, Attorney Robert H. Green, took our case and was able to prove that our firing was illegal. It took a while but we were reinstated and received the pay we had missed. I finished the year and resigned as I had planned, and the other women continued to teach. Later, the law was changed!

In the 1960s, my brother Paul moved to Arlington because of the threat of the Inner Belt highway, which was to come through our neighborhood. I was part of the group that worked against it. It didn't seem right that this highway would divide the city into two parts. It would have meant the end of

Cambridge. It would have wiped out the whole neighborhood. We didn't work on our houses, because we didn't know what would happen. It was scary.

Central Square has changed. At one time, small stores lined Norfolk and Essex Streets near the Avenue. There were barber-shops and a candy and ice cream store as well as a diner on Essex Street. I can remember being at the meat market on Norfolk Street on a Saturday morning in May, 1927, when we got word of Lindbergh's landing in Paris, after the first solo flight across the Atlantic. I remember shopping at the Manhattan Market which was across from Essex Street on Massachusetts Avenue.

More recently, Wiener's, a store that sold newspapers from all over, couldn't afford the rent in the new Holmes building. I've been really interested in the Holmes building because I taught with Edith Holmes in the Houghton nursery school, and we became friends. Woolworth's went out of business in 1997. I remember the lunch counter and the cafeteria they had on the third floor in the sixties.



*Essex Street diner, rear views of 2-6 Essex and 1-4 Whitney Court, 1935*

Carlton S. Redmond, appraiser. Cambridge Historical Commission

This has always been a mixed neighborhood. Now we are losing African American families who are moving out because of higher housing costs, and African American families are not moving in.

We are trying to get the African American Heritage Trail into the Cambridge School curriculum. We have to take pride in our history.

(This article is based on conversation between the *Aword* editor and Suzanne Green in November 2003 as well as written material supplied courtesy of Ms. Green.)

## St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church— 95th Anniversary

The history of the present congregation of St. Bartholomew's Church began in 1908 when a group of Black worshipers found themselves in need of their own church because of their growing numbers. The group met on Windsor Street in Area 4 to plan for the future. At that first meeting on March 31, 1908, they named themselves the “St. Andrew's Association.” The names of the original membership are memorialized on a brown tablet on the rear wall of the nave of the current church.

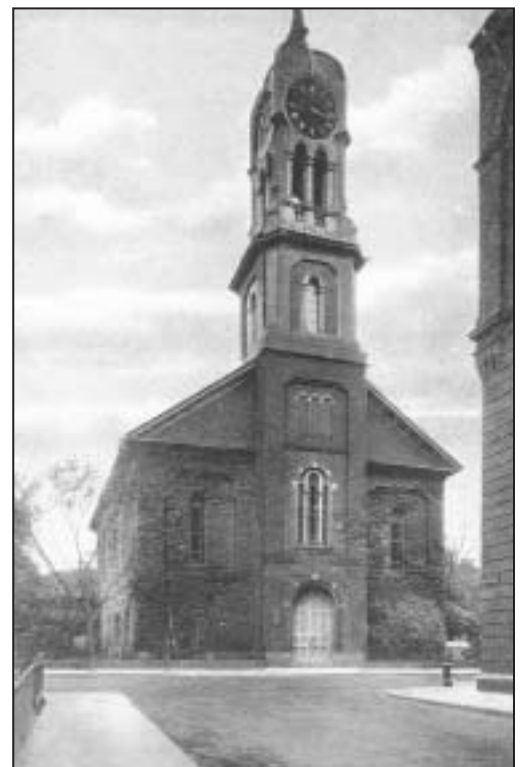
Upon petition to the Diocese of Massachusetts by the St. Andrew's Association, the 47 worshipers were granted an 80-seat mission building located at 211 Columbia Street. The St. Andrew's Association was to become St. Bartholomew's Church. In 1941 the First Holiness Church lost its

property at 59 Moore Street as part of an eminent domain land-taking in order to build Washington Elms. The First Holiness Church moved into 211 Columbia Street and St. Bartholomew's became located at 239 Harvard Street in May 1941.

The Rev. L. Nelson Foxx arrived at St. Bartholomew's Church in October 1988 and was installed as rector in February 1989. St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, at 239 Harvard Street, celebrated its 95th Anniversary in October 2003.

***At right: Harvard Street Methodist Episcopal Church before the bell tower was removed, now St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church***

Postcard reprint, Cambridge Public Library



## Settlement Houses in Area 4

Both the Margaret Fuller House and the Cambridge Neighborhood House functioned as settlement houses through the years. Programming included club groups for boys and girls and men and women, baby clinics, mothers' conferences, and indoor and outdoor recreational activities. In 1963 both Houses became members of the Cambridge Alliance of Settlement Houses. After the Alliance dissolved, the two houses merged in 1971 to function jointly as the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, Inc.

### Cambridge Neighborhood House

The Cambridge Neighborhood House, which was located at 79 Moore Street on the corner of Harvard Street in Area 4 until 1973, housed the country's first childcare center. The Neighborhood House served as an educational, social, and recreational center for almost one hundred years.



*Cambridge Neighborhood House, 1821*

Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission

Pauline Agassiz Shaw, daughter of scientist Louis Agassiz, found the building appropriate for her newly established day nursery and kindergarten. In 1879 she opened a library, reading room, and sewing classes, and in 1883 she began a mother's club, dressmaking and woodworking classes for children, and built a playground. After leasing the facilities for several years, she bought the property in 1887, and expanded it. By 1878 this portion of Area 4 was the site of extensive tenement construction. Single houses were cut up into apartments for two and three families, factories were built where orchards had grown and brick tenements replaced some of the frame houses of

an earlier day. The kindergarten that she established was taken over in 1889 by the Cambridge Public Schools. By 1900, she had set up classes in music, drawing, and painting.

Day and evening activities on the playground next to the building were central to the program. By the 1840s the playground encompassed a whole block with an outdoor dance floor, basketball court, fireplaces, and shaded and surfaced spaces for rest and games. The site of the former Neighborhood House is part of the City's planned 238 Broadway/Harvard Street park development.

The Neighborhood House, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places largely to commemorate the work of Pauline Shaw, burned in 1973 and had to be torn down. The activities she founded continued in the work of the present-day Margaret Fuller House on Cherry Street.

### Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

At 71 Cherry Street, on the corner, is the big dwelling, built in 1807, where Margaret Fuller's father set up housekeeping in 1809, and where she was born in 1810. Famed author, feminist, transcendentalist, and social critic Margaret Fuller received a classical education from her father and was the first woman allowed to use a Harvard library. Fuller was the editor for the first American women's magazine, the *Dial*, as well as a foreign correspondent. Her book, *Women in the 19th Century*, was one of the first published calls for women's rights and led to the first women's convention in 1848. "Let women be sea captains if they will," she suggested among other things. Shocked reviewers—all male—were derisive. "It's a subject that no virtuous woman can treat justly," the *Broadway Journal* moralized. "Woman is nothing but a wife."

Margaret Fuller became the first female member of the Transcendental Club, joining such male luminaries as Ralph Waldo Emerson. Her involvement in the plight



*Neighborhood House Fire, 1973*

Courtesy of the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House



*Children at the Margaret Fuller House, 1937.  
Do you recognize anyone?*

Courtesy of the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

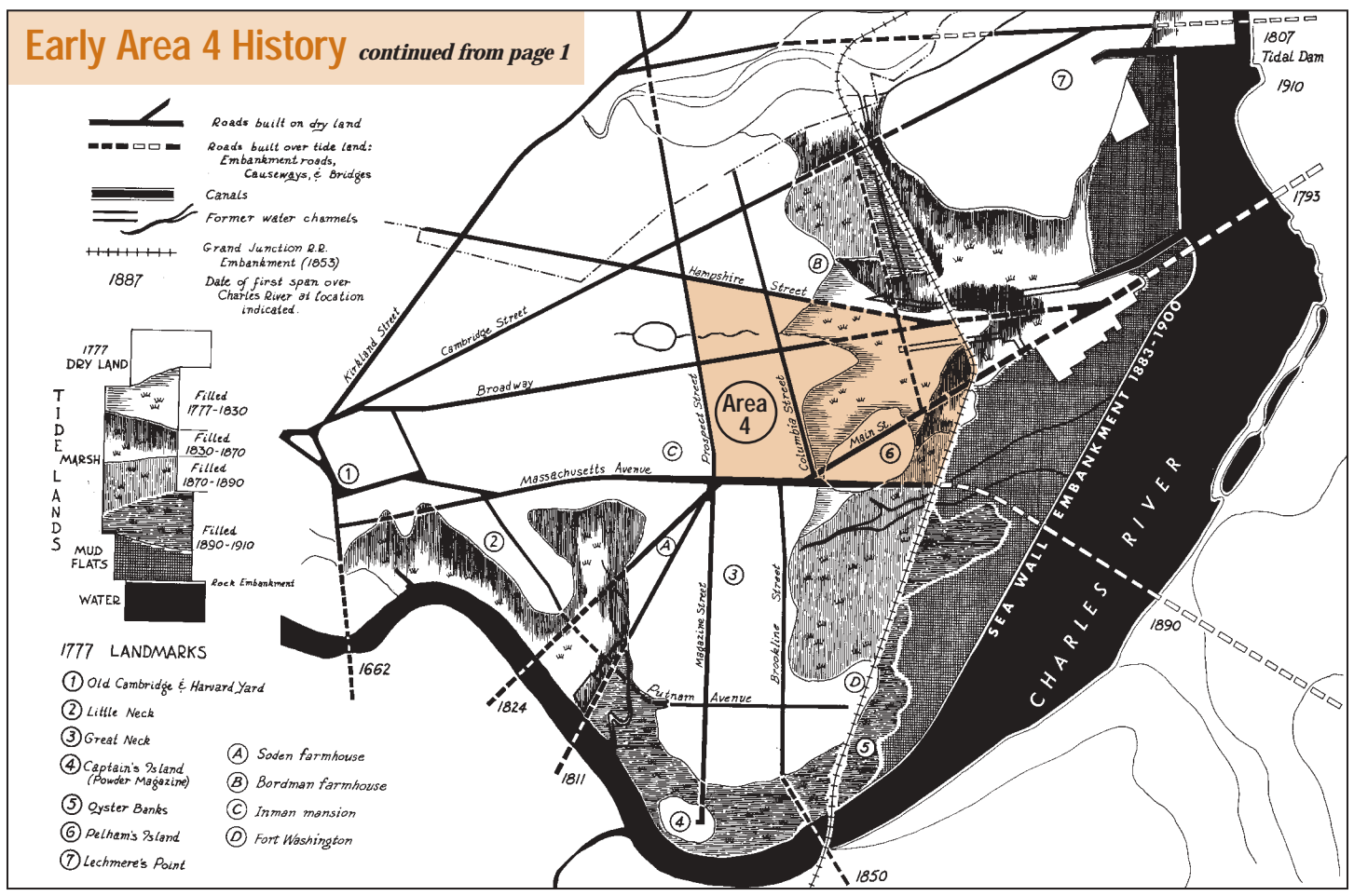
of women in prisons and hospitals led to the establishment of a house of refuge for discharged criminals. She taught in Bronson Alcott's progressive school with a curriculum that stressed how children could become better members of society by developing their best powers of mind. She insisted that political freedom should be acknowledged "as a right, not yielded to as a concession." The Margaret Fuller House is an outgrowth of Fuller's social views and practice.

In 1850, Margaret Fuller, her husband and their son, drowned in a shipwreck off Long Island, New York.

In Fuller's childhood the house at 71 Cherry Street had a porch all along the front, big elm trees on the lawn, and a garden back to Pine Street. Although the building developed into tenements later in the 19th century, it acquired its present

*continues on next page*

### Early Area 4 History *continued from page 1*



**Cambridgeport shoreline and road development**

Map courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission (William Simmers)

(the intersection of Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue), was one of the major land areas. When you stand on the corner of Main and Osborn Streets today, on what was the northern edge of Pelham's Island, you can see a street sign pointing the way to the Island of 1630.

#### 1793-1815 Trade Route and Early Settlement

Lafayette Square began to be settled after the opening of the West Boston Bridge (site of the Longfellow Bridge) on Thanksgiving

Day, 1793. The way to Pelham's Island became a main road to Boston, and the causeway to the bridge (Main Street) became an important commercial location. This road to the oyster banks became the chief road between inland farms and Boston. As the main road from the bridge to Old Cambridge and points west, Main Street and Lafayette Square became a market center with several inns and other commercial businesses. A toll booth for the bridge was near the corner of Osborn Street. The center of Cambridgeport in the

1820s was not Central Square but Lafayette Square.

Andrew Bordman, who played an important role in the early 19th-century development of Area 4, built a home at Windsor and Hampshire Streets. Jonathan Austin purchased property in the Lafayette Square area and laid out Austin Street (now known as Bishop Allen Drive) through part of his property and established house lots there.

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### Settlement Houses *continued from previous page*

function in 1902 when the YWCA leased several rooms. By 1904 the entire house was being utilized as a settlement house. The house was purchased and remodeled to suit its growing needs in 1924.

Long-term residents from the community can tell you about learning to jitterbug in its

teen program, doing homework in the library upstairs, organizing neighbors to advocate for better housing, speaking out on the Fuller House radio station, or hearing the cries of infants as they received their shots in the well-baby clinic.

Today the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House is a nonprofit, community-based organization whose historic legacy and continuing purpose is to strengthen and

empower families and individuals who are traditionally underserved and residents in the Area 4 community.

The Margaret Fuller House is in the Cambridge Women's Heritage Project Women's Historical Walking Tour of Central Square. (For more information on this project contact Mary Leno, Project Coordinator, Cambridge Women's Commission, at 617-349-4697.)



## Early Area 4 History

*continued from page 11*

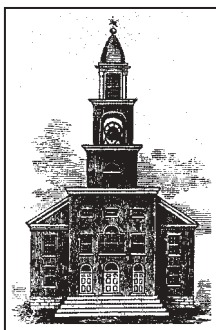
*(Editor's Note: Considerable information about the early history of Area 4 (Cambridgeport) was taken directly from the Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Cambridgeport, by the Cambridge Historical Commission, 1971. Copies of this report are available for purchase from the Cambridge Historical Commission located at 831 Massachusetts Avenue. Call them at 617-349-4685 for further information.)*

Broadway (originally part of the Cambridge and Concord Turnpike) and Hampshire Street (originally part of the Middlesex Turnpike) connected the West Broadway Bridge with inland towns beginning in 1805, the same year that Congress declared Cambridgeport a United States Port of Entry. A network of canals for the port emerged. Building lots sold with restrictions that any building should be at least three stories high and constructed of brick or stone. Rows of such buildings were built on Broadway and Harvard Street. Around Worcester and Suffolk Streets small house lots (40 by 80 feet) began to sell, as did larger 100-foot square lots offered by Andrew Bordman near Washington, Pine, Cherry, Moore, and Clark Streets.

Although still remote and marshy, with high tides overflowing cellars (much as today when basements and cellars still flood along Pine Street and adjoining streets), the estimated population of the "port" had grown to 1000 in 1800. To combat frequent floods, land in the Lafayette Square area was raised by as much as six feet in the 1880s.

In 1802 the district built its first school, a small, wooden building on a lot donated by Andrew Bordman at the corner of Windsor and School Streets. Today on that corner stands the brick Boardman School, bearing the donor's name but with a slightly different spelling, built in 1868 as a replacement for the 1802 building.

In 1807 a public square at Columbia and Harvard Streets was set aside and on it a large brick meetinghouse was built. Columbia Street, on the west side of the square, was planned as the main axis of the city. Across from the meetinghouse, "Eight Block Place" was laid out as the shopping center of



**Old Brick Meeting House, 1807**

From a discourse delivered in the Church of the Cambridgeport Parish, January 12, 1864, by John F.W. Ware. Cambridge Historical Commission

the future city. Small lots lined each side of the road, but the Cambridge selectmen refused to accept Columbia Street in 1806 as the main roadway because not a single house had been built on it. On the corner of Harvard and Prospect Streets in 1808 was a parsonage, and the land between it and Eight Block Place was purchased for a burying ground in 1811. Sennott Park, the two-acre park on Broadway, now occupies the burying-ground site. The city transferred many, if not all, of the graves to the current Cambridge Cemetery in 1865.

### 1815-1912 Commercial/Industrial Development and Community Leaders

One of the first firehouses built in 1832 by the newly established Cambridge Fire Department still stands on Main Street between Cherry and Windsor Streets. It was later called Union Engine #2-Franklin Hook and Ladder Company #1. The original wood structure burned down and was replaced by a brick firehouse in 1846. It was used as a firehouse until 1894, and at the turn of the century the building housed a fraternal organization. Since 1916 it has been home to the Christian Mission Holiness Church. The lintels of the two large front doors, which opened to bring in the horse-drawn fire engines, are still visible although the openings themselves have been bricked up.

Until the 1840s, a half-mile strip of woodland kept Area 4 physically separated from the college-centered rural community of Old Cambridge, and extensive marshland on the northeast isolated the Port from East Cambridge. The canals that had been dug for coastal shipping blocked industrial progress until the 1870s, when they began to be filled in.

The commercial development of Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue began early in the 19th century. As the main road from the West Boston Bridge to Old Cambridge and points west, Main Street began its commercial development early in the 19th century. Inns and other commercial structures were built and the avenue changed from a market center at the hay-



*Lafayette Square in the mid-1820s. The Old Hovey Tavern (Douglass Street) on the left was located on the north edge of Lafayette Square. On the far right, partially visible behind a tree, is the First Universalist Church of Cambridge. The church was built in 1822 and was moved in 1888 to 8 Inman Street, across from City Hall.*

Chamber of Commerce Collection.  
Cambridge Historical Commission.



*Former firehouse on Main Street, now the Christian Mission Holiness Church*

Photo by Gerald Bergman

market (now Central Square) to a business strip stretching from Inman Street on the west to Windsor Street on the east. In 1849, 83 out of about 100 retail shops along with small manufacturing concerns and workshops were located along Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue in Area 4. Eighty percent of Cambridgeport's shops and stores were located there in 1865. Shops and stores were also built along the other major roads such as Broadway, Harvard Street, and Hampshire Street.

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The largest single plant in the Port before 1850 was the Charles Davenport Car Company, founded in 1832. The plant covered the entire block from Osborn Street to Portland Street on the south side of Main. Soap making was also done on a large scale during this period. The manufacturing of cabinets, furniture, ropes, bricks, cigars, and leather were among other small-scale, skilled trades. Avery Howe established a bacon-curing plant on the corner of Windsor and Main. In 1845 George Page set up an extensive box-making operation at the junction of Broadway and Hampshire Street. Area 4 became a center of the confectionery industry in the mid century. Much of the population of Area 4 consisted of craftspeople, service workers, and retail tradespeople, many of whom worked along Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street and lived in the surrounding neighborhood.

Most of Area 4 in the early 1800s was relatively undeveloped, and as a result Norfolk Street (across from Worcester Street) became the location for the Cambridge almshouse, which was built in 1818. Land at that time was mostly held in small parcels and sold as demand arose. The 11-acre almshouse site, west of Norfolk Street to Prospect Street, and between Bishop Allen Drive and Harvard Street, was subdivided in 1836, the year the Almshouse burned.

In 1830 the site for the new Town Hall was at the northeast corner of the Cambridgeport Almshouse lot (the corner of Harvard and Norfolk Street), where we now see St. Mary's of the Annunciation. This was considered by many as a central location for the entire town and supported a shift of the center of population from Old Cambridge to the east. The columned Greek Revival town hall was used for town meetings from 1832 to 1853, when it was leveled by fire. On March 17, 1846, the legislature passed "an act to establish the City of Cambridge," and the Cambridge city government was inaugurated here. Three rival villages were united—Old Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and East Cambridge. Until 1900 Cambridge consisted of these three main parts. In 1848 Congressman Abraham Lincoln spoke from the Town Hall to an overflow crowd of Cambridge residents urging them to support Zachary Taylor for president.

The law office of James P. Richardson, who organized and trained Company C, the first volunteers to answer President Lincoln's call for troops, was located on the corner of



**Davenport Car Works, 708 Main Street**

H. F. Walling, Map of the City of Cambridge, 1854



**Boston Woven Hose and Rubber**

Gilman, Arthur, ed., the *Cambridgeport of Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-six* (Cambridge, 1896)



**Sylvester Tower Piano-forte manufacturer**

Courtesy Mrs. R. C. Howe. Cambridge Historical Commission

Massachusetts Avenue and Norfolk Street. Abolitionist, journalist, pacifist, and social activist William Lloyd Garrison lived from 1839 to 1841 on the corner of Elm and Broadway (283–285 Broadway, the current site of the Yayla Tribal Rug store). Garrison was one of the earliest to demand the immediate and complete emancipation of slaves. He was the founder and editor of *The Liberator* (1831–1865). At the end of the Civil War he turned his energies to the plight of Native Americans and, above all, women's rights.

At 296 Washington Street is the former home of Cambridge historian Reverend Lucius Paige, the author of the *History of Cambridge*, published in 1877. Paige was an

ordained Universalist minister who became pastor of the old First Cambridge Universalist Church, then in Lafayette Square, but later moved to Inman Street across from City Hall. He was also the first city clerk in Cambridge, treasurer of the Cambridgeport Savings Bank, and a justice of the peace, assessor, and state legislator. Thomas Whittemore, who lived at 288 Washington Street, was considered by many to be the most influential Universalist editor of the nineteenth century. Whittemore served as a selectman of Cambridge, and as an alderman when it was incorporated as a city.

At 71 Cherry Street is the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, the birthplace of Margaret Fuller in 1810. Elias Howe Jr. invented the first sewing machine at 55 Cherry Street in 1845.

The railroad was built in the 1850s along Albany Street. In 1900 Lever Brothers located its plant along the railroad tracks on the Eastern edge of what is now Area 4. Lever Brothers bought out Curtis Davis in 1900 and J. P. Mullen in 1902, allowing it to control a wide strip of land between Broadway and Harvard Street, from Portland Street to the railroad. This area is now part of Technology Square. Area 4 became a major piano and organ industrial center with the establishment of the Mason and Hamlin organ factory just west of the railroad tracks, as well as George Woods and Company, Ivers and Pond (they built two piano factories in Area 4, one near Main Street, the other near Osborn), W. H. Seaverns and Company, the Sylvester Tower Piano-forte factory on Broadway, and the Standard Action Company. In 1886, Boston Woven Hose and Rubber Company moved to its site at Hampshire and Portland Streets.

A small number of African Americans had been living in Area 4 for some time, but in the early 19th century African Americans came in large numbers from Boston to enroll in Cambridge's integrated schools. After 1855, when Cambridgeport changed from a commercial to an industrial center, its population increased dramatically. Immigration brought with it major changes in the ethnic composition of the population. Following the potato blight of 1845, the Irish came first and in the greatest numbers. Canadian and new British immigrants soon followed. Germans came early, in small but consistent numbers. Around 1870 Swedish

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## Early Area 4 History

*continued from page 13*

immigrants entered Cambridgeport, and Portuguese settlement came after 1895 as an overflow from East Cambridge. After 1900, Russian Jews and other eastern Europeans moved into the area in steadily increasing numbers. By 1905 a full 31% of Cambridgeport's population was of recent foreign origin.

Area 4's most significant growth occurred in the latter half of the 19th century, when industry moved in and when extensive housing was built to accommodate the rapidly increasing population. The horizontally divided "decker" house began making its appearance in the 1880s as a way of allowing more intensive land use brought about by increasing land prices and rents due to new waves of immigration. Older houses were moved to the backs of lots to make room for the new housing. Tenements were the standard form of urban workers' housing. Most tenements were built in Area 4 between 1870 and 1900; few were built after that. By 1900, the three-decker took over as the standard form of workers' housing.

In 1912 the subway from Park Street to Harvard Square opened. It went across the Longfellow Bridge and under Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue, following the path of the old horsecar and trolley lines. Because commuting time to Boston was cut so drastically, Lafayette Square lost much of its importance as a commercial district.

### Newtowne Court and Washington Elms

The two earliest federal housing projects in Cambridge were Newtowne Court (1937) and Washington Elms (1941). These developments together occupy the entire area from Main to Harvard Streets and from Portland to Windsor Streets. To provide this land, nearly 200 buildings were demolished, eight streets were obliterated and fourteen small blocks combined into two large ones. The core of Cambridge's Black community, which was located in Area 4, was displaced by Roosevelt's "slum clearance" project to make way for these federal developments. The City of Cambridge was divided over the development, and in the early 1930s the Cambridge City Council opposed the new development.

In opposition to Newtowne Court, Rodney Long, Massachusetts Real Estate Exchange,

wrote to the City Council, "It is to be hoped in the interest of the public good and the protection of your tax paying apartment properties and tax paying home owners who constitute your greatest asset that you will refuse in every way to cooperate with Division of Housing and block this project. It is a direct threat to the economic structure of the City of Cambridge. It will produce no good, and create great harm....The citizens of Cambridge have a right to demand that you do everything in your power to prevent this deficit breeding, pernicious project from materializing in Cambridge." (*Cambridge Chronicle*, December 1935)

In support of Newtowne Court, the *Cambridge Chronicle*, December 16, 1937, wrote, "Newtowne Court will be a veritable Utopia for the underprivileged of Cambridge. There is a large rubber tiled playground outside for children, away from the dangers of traffic; and a basement game room for children to use on rainy days. There's a white enamel gas range, a kitchen



***Moller's furniture store, at the intersection of Main, Columbia, and Massachusetts Avenue dominated Lafayette Square as seen in this photograph looking down Main Street in 1910. The vacant Shell gas station, now on the Moller's site, will be torn down as part of the new Lafayette Square roadway and plaza development.***

From the Boston Elevated Railway Collection.  
Cambridge Historical Commission.

cabinet in which to keep dishes and supplies, and an automatic gas refrigerator in which to keep food. In the basement there is a community laundry, with set tubs, and an abundance of hot and cold water, and drying rooms for clothes drying and ironing boards. There are incinerators for garbage



***A look down Columbia Street at Lafayette Square. The vacant area on the right is the former site of Moller's furniture store.***

Photo from Cambridge Planning Board Collection.  
Cambridge Historical Commission.

disposal, and every possible convenience for people, who, up until this time, have had to suffer privations...."

In order to clear the nine-acre Newtowne Court site south of Washington Street, a total of 119 families were relocated, four city streets were closed, and 149 old wood-framed tenement buildings were demolished. The cost of the nine-acre site was \$833,00 in 1935. Initial rent policies were set by the newly formed U.S. Housing Authority. In order to be income eligible, a family's household income could not exceed five times the rent. For a two-bedroom apartment with a monthly rent of \$27, the maximum yearly income to qualify was \$1,620.

More than 1,300 families applied to move into the 294 apartments at Newtowne Court in 1938. The high demand led to creation of a rental waiting list. Among the 324 families who moved into Washington Elms in 1941 were war workers, college instructors, engineers, mechanics, and families from 32 states.

For more information about Newtowne Court and Washington Elms you are invited to view the wonderful history quilt project at the Pisani Center on Washington Street. "The Fabric of Our Lives—A History of Newtowne Court and Washington Elms" makes that history come alive through personal photos and written recollections. This project, directed by Laura Blacklow and Mary Russell, was conceived and carried out by Cambridge women.

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## 1948-1970s

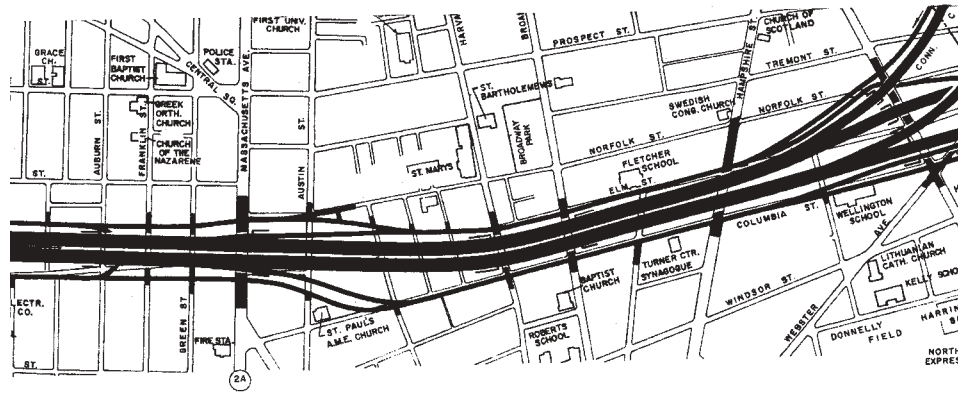
### Protecting the Neighborhood

The eight-lane Inner Belt, initially proposed in a 1948 Highway Master Plan, was to be connected to today's Central Artery, which was completed in 1952. The Inner Belt Loop was intended to connect route I-95 to I-93, along Elm and Brookline Streets. In 1956 the federal government guaranteed a 90% subsidy of interstate highway construction, and the Inner Belt came closer to reality.

Through most of the 1950s Cambridge residents discussed various alternative routes, hoping that the final highway plan would spare most of their neighborhood. In 1962 the state and federal governments again proposed the Elm-Brookline route as the preferred route. The highway planners' Inner Belt dream would have destroyed the Area 4 and Cambridgeport communities by displacing as many as 1,800 families and more than 5,000 individuals, dislocating 155 retail and service establishments and industries, ending more than 2,500 jobs, destroying five churches and their communities as well as three public schools with 1,700 students.

Area 4 residents spent much of the late 1950s and the 1960s organizing against the Inner Belt. Residents marched to the State House on October 15, 1966, in order to take advantage of the election year. Governor Volpe was campaigning for re-election and also for the first four-year term for a governor of Massachusetts. Groups were urging a restudy of the highway plan and a delay in construction. The "Anti-Inner Belt Day" program was arranged by the United Effort to Save Our Cities and was sponsored by Neighbors United, the Cambridge Committee on the Inner Belt, St. Mary's and Blessed Sacrament churches, and the Central Square Ministers' Association. St. Mary's brought their 20-piece band. People carried signs and posters saying "Beat the Belt" and "Cambridge is a city, NOT a highway."

Lorraine Scott of Washington Street in Area 4 remembered the 1969 "People Before Highways" march: "We organized and carried a plywood black casket representing the death of the neighborhood and the death of Model Cities, with a sign saying 'Here Lies Model Cities.' Cambridge Model Cities plans were carried in the coffin to remind people what would happen to that program if the Inner Belt were built. Women dressed as widows marched with



**1962 plan for Inner Belt**

From a 1962 state publication

their children. Marchers came from Elm Street, Washington Street, Columbia Street, and all the streets around Central Square. The line of marchers stretched from City Hall to MIT. We carried signs saying "Beat the Belt" and "People before Highways." How could we lose, we were all united!"

Residents of Area 4 and Cambridgeport, supported by clergy and local organizations, were the heroes of the Inner Belt struggle. (For more information and recollections on the Inner Belt struggle read *Crossroads, Stories of Central Square* by Sarah Boyer. Copies are available at the Cambridge Library and are for sale at the Cambridge Historical Commission. For Area 4 resident interviews, photos, and a brief history of the Inner Belt struggle read the article "Beat the Belt!" in edition #16 of the *4word* on line at [mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word).)

Technology Square, begun in the early 1960s, cleared everything from Main Street to Broadway and from Portland Street to the railroad. This area had been known as the "yellow block" and was comprised of tenement houses for low-income persons. This area is now owned by MIT, and is dominated by Draper Labs and various high-tech and bio-tech industries.

Many Area 4 residents played a key role in the establishment of rent control in the 1970s. Janet Rose of Pine Street addressed hundreds of rent control advocates in 1969 from the steps of City Hall. As chairwoman of the Cambridge Housing Convention's Vigil Committee she camped in front of City Hall with a casket containing the "remains" of the proposed Rent Control ordinance when the City Council defeated it on a 5-4 vote.

From the 1970s on, Area 4 history has been dominated by the struggle to maintain a diverse and affordable community. The struggle for quality and equity in the school system, community safety, affordable housing and health care, and decent jobs at decent pay, still dominate the political landscape.

(Additional information was taken from *Historic Walks in Cambridge* by John Harris, 1986, *The Zone of Emergence*, by Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, 1962, and the *Newtowne Court 1999 Celebration Program*, courtesy of Jane Richards. The *4word* editor's appreciation goes to Kathleen [Kit] L. Rawlins, a resident of Area 4 and assistant director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, for her help and support.)

The *4word* will be featuring additional historic highlights of Area 4 in future editions. We will highlight places, events, people, and the many immigrant groups that comprise the history of Area 4 up to the present. Do you have stories to tell? Do you have photos that you can share with the *4word* that depict events, places, and people that should be highlighted? What are your ideas? Who lives and has lived in our neighborhood that has a special place in our history? How does Area 4 shape the history of Cambridge? What events took place in Area 4 that had a special impact on issues such as rent control, civil rights, education, housing, arts, and entertainment that should be memorialized? What do you know about the history of your house, your business, your church, the block you live on and your community group in Area 4 that you would be willing to share? Please contact the editor of the *4word* by calling 617-354-2648 or e-mailing [gerrberg@aol.com](mailto:gerrberg@aol.com).

## Locations mentioned in this issue of *4word*

### PLACES

- 1) Neighborhood House
- 2) Newtowne Court
- 3) Gordon's Central Square Theater
- 4) Manhattan Market
- 5) Essex Street diner
- 6) Curtis Davis Soap
- 7) Davenport Car Works
- 8) Close building
- 9) Squirrel Brand
- 10) Cambridge Brands
- 11) Russell's Chocolates
- 12) Lafayette Square
- 13) Pelham's Island
- 14) Boardman School
- 15) Clement Morgan Park
- 16) Burying ground/Sennott Park
- 17) Firehouse/Christian Mission Holiness Church
- 18) St. Bartholomew's Church

19) Almshouse

20) Town Hall, 1832

21) Thurston, Hall and Company/Fletcher School

22) Site of first telephone conversation

23) Old Meeting House

24) First High School

25) Pisani Center, Washington Elms

### PEOPLE

26) William Lloyd Garrison

27) Elias Howe/sewing machine

28) Rev. Lucius Page

29) Margaret Fuller

30) Maria Baldwin House

31) Charlotte Hawkins Brown marker

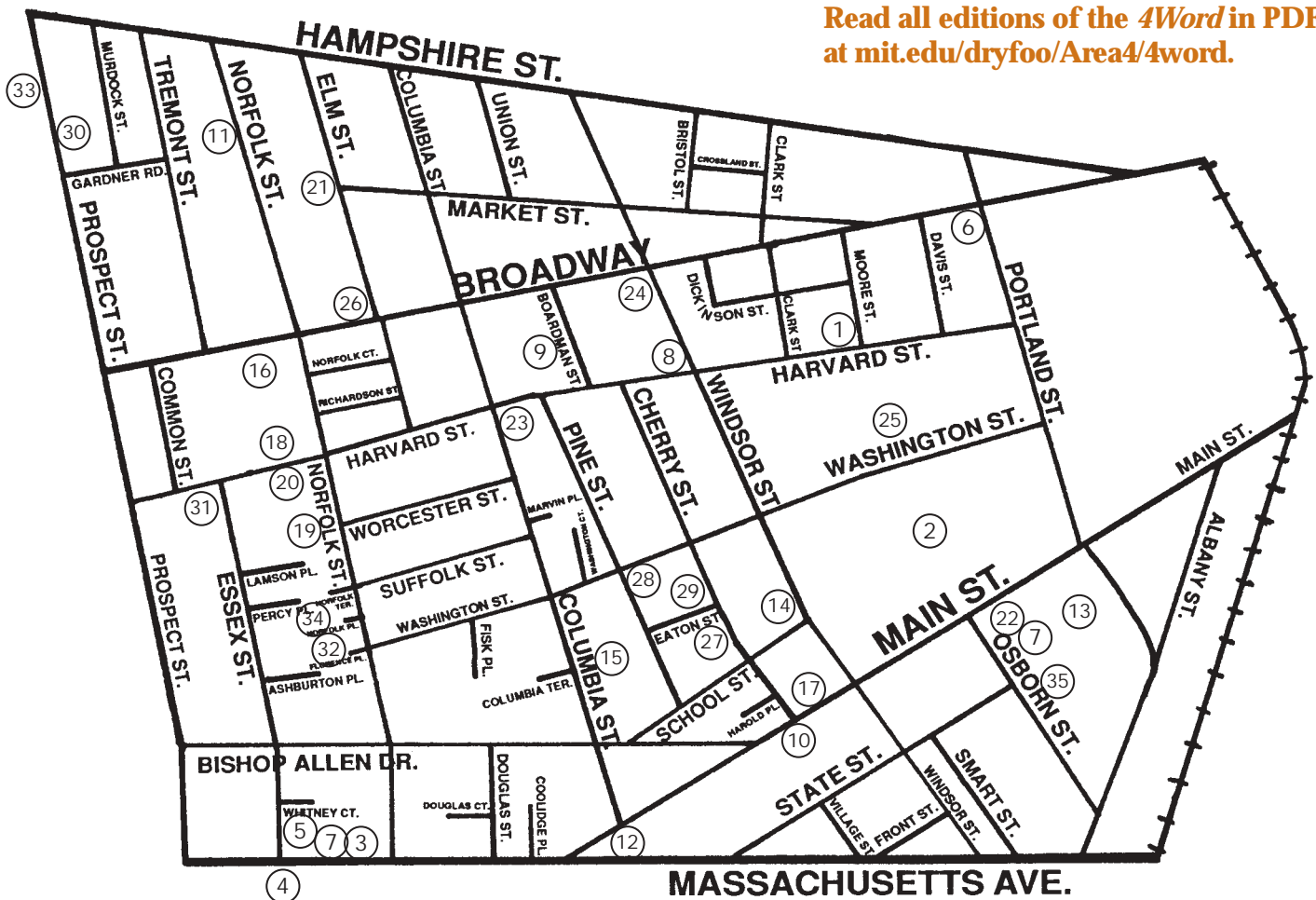
32) Milton and Lewis Clarke marker

33) Clement G. Morgan marker

34) Joshua Bowen Smith marker

35) Edwin Land

Read all editions of the *4Word* in PDF  
at [mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word).



about



The *4word* is funded by a UDAG grant from the Area Four Neighborhood Coalition. We thank the Community Art Center for administering the grant. Suggestions about articles and interviews and contributions to People Pride, the Walking Tour, and Your Calendar are invited. Contact Gerald Bergman, *4word* editor, PO Box 390768 (02139), telephone: 617-354-2648, fax: 617-864-2519, e-mail: [gerrberg@aol.com](mailto:gerrberg@aol.com). Read all 18 editions of the *4Word* in PDF format at [mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word).