



The
Methuen
Magical
History
Tour



1. 1859 House

12 Hampshire Street

c.1859

The land and most of the buildings along the south side of Hampshire Street between Broadway and Lowell Street were owned by the Methuen Company during the latter half of the 19th century. This house is said to have been built in 1859 and according to William Barnes, it was a tanner and currier shop, with a hat shop owned by Bowen and Grosvenor in the basement. It may not have belonged to the Methuen Company at that time. However, D. Nevins, who purchased the Methuen Company in 1864, is shown as the owner on the 1872 map; on later maps the Methuen Company is shown as the owner. It was rented for a mix of commercial and residential uses. This house is similar in detail to the old Waldo/Currier Block (300 Broadway), rebuilt after the 1849 fire. A photograph of the Edwin J. Castle Drug Store in the Currier Block can be found in the Christmas Supplement of the Methuen Transcript (1898).

A Chinese laundry was located in the building from about 1900 until the Methuen Company sold the building in 1922 to the Methuen Club, a group of local business and professional men. From the 1920s to 1975, the building was used as a clubhouse with bowling alleys, billiard tables and card tables. Until recently, the building housed a restaurant.



2. Methuen Company Store

4-6 Hampshire Street

Built 1885

The land and most of the buildings along the south side of Hampshire Street between Broadway and Lowell Street were owned by the Methuen Company during the latter half of the 19th century. According to the Methuen Transcript, the small store at 4-6 Hampshire Street was built by the Methuen Company in 1885. It was described as being one story with a basement, 30' x 35', and the "handsomest store in Methuen." It was constructed by W. J. Nichols and painted by D. C. Rollins. Its first occupant was Silas Holman who sold dry and fancy goods. Holman, who occupied both sides of the store, was still in business at that site in 1901/2. In 1932, it housed a First National Store, and a Tailor Shop.



3. The Odd Fellows Building

7 Hampshire Street

1899

Construction of the Odd Fellows Building designed by Lawrence architect George G. Adams and dedicated in September of 1899, was the culmination of a 20 year effort by the Hope Lodge of Methuen to build a permanent home. It was built on the site of a prominent early landmark, the so-called "Old Shoe Shop." The contract for construction went to Albert E. Lang of Lawrence who began work in October of 1898 and completed the building in less than a year. The Post Office and two stores occupied the first floor. The second floor was divided into seven offices and a small lodge room. A large lodge room occupied the third floor, while a banquet hall, kitchen, and smoking room were located on the fourth floor.

Hope Lodge 34, I.O.O.F. was instituted in Methuen in 1844 by a group of prominent citizens including John Low and George A. Waldo. Although initially an active chapter, the group surrendered their charter in 1855. Interest was revived in 1868 and the charter returned the following year with Daniel T. Morrison elected as first noble grand. In 1879, meeting rooms for the Lodge were located in the James Dodge Store (271 Broadway). At the time of construction of the new Odd Fellows Building on Hampshire Street, the organization was in a strong financial position and had more than 200 members.



4. Exchange Hotel

275 Broadway

1851/1906

The first Exchange Hotel, at one time also known as Low's Hotel, was built on this site in 1807 to serve travelers on the 1806 Essex Turnpike, now Broadway. The major Broadway/Hampshire intersection was originally called Exchange Square, demonstrating the importance of this building. Fire destroyed the original building in 1857 along with the hotel stables, two other livery stables, five houses and most of the Currier building across the street (300



Broadway) which was burned to the first floor. The 1860 Directory lists Alvah Kimball as the landlord of the Methuen Hotel. This hotel was acquired by Silas Q. Hersey in 1873, who operated it until his death in 1891. The building, which had for many years been the home of the Methuen Club, was acquired by Edward F. Searles in 1897, and remodeled in 1906 for use by the Y.M.C.A and again in 1915 as the Masonic Temple. A plaque on the building describes the dedication to Edward's father Jesse G. Searles.

According to Barbin, remodeling of the Exchange Hotel was done according to plans by Searles' architect Henry Vaughan. Vaughan altered the roof line making it flat, (probably changing the old gable to the present hip). He added the tower at the north end and made a gymnasium on the second floor. The exterior was stuccoed and embellished with classical details. Changes in 1915 were mostly internal. Significant repairs were made to the front wall of the building in 1882, and in 1883 fifteen gas chandeliers were installed, greatly improving the lighting in the hall. Significant alterations were made in 1930 when the meeting hall was cut up into office space and Colonial Revival exterior detail was added. The architect for these alterations was John H. Feugill; Louis C. Cyr was the contractor.



5. Old Town Hall

290 Broadway

c. 1853

Centralization of economic activity around the Methuen Cotton Mills (47 Osgood Street) and the rise in smaller local businesses that manufactured hats and shoes caused the town center to shift to the area around Osgood Street, Hampshire Street, and Broadway. Town meetings were held in the First Church, Congregational, which moved its meeting house to 30 Pleasant Street in 1832, and by the 1850s the town had grown sufficiently to require construction of a Town Hall. Prominently situated at the corner of Broadway and Osgood Street, the Town Hall was built in 1853, on the site of Rufus Howe's blacksmith shop. The Methuen National Bank had its offices in the first floor of the town hall from 1853 until 1911 when the bank relocated to space across the street in the former Dodge Store (271 Broadway). Before construction of the new Central Fire Station in 1899 (24 Lowell Street), the hook and ladder and hose wagon were stored in the basement of the town hall. The building functioned as the town hall until 1959 when the present municipal building was constructed on the site of the Nevins Estate on Hampshire Street.



6. James S. Dodge Store/ Turnpike Building

271 Broadway

1879

271 Broadway was built in 1879 for James S. Dodge by local builder M. G. Copp. Earlier buildings on this site, including the so-called Hoyte House, were torn down and parts removed at this time. James S. Dodge and Son, Grocers, were located at 271 Broadway until 1901, when the building was purchased by Edward F. Searles. In 1904, Searles moved the J. G. Frederick house from the south side of Park Street and added it to the Dodge building,

known for a time as the Turnpike Hotel. Subsequent occupants included the Methuen National Bank and the Methuen Hotel and Tavern. The building originally housed an Odd Fellows Hall, which, according to the newspaper, was frescoed by the firm of Austin and Blake of Haverhill and decorated in a very fine manner. This



room was in use until the Odd Fellows built their own building at 5-7 Hampshire Street in 1899.

James S. Dodge was born in 1826 in New Boston, N. H. He and his family lived for a time in Andover and came to Methuen in the 1860s. In 1866 he purchased Samuel Webster's grocery business, then lodged in the Methuen Company Store building at 42-46 Hampshire Street. Dodge's business prospered and in 1879 he erected the store at 271 Broadway, where he and his son, Selwin, catered to a large trade. In 1891 they installed electric lighting and in 1893 they employed 7 clerks and kept 4 teams. An advertisement in the 1896 directory declared them to be dealers in fine groceries, teas, coffees, spices, hardware, cutlery, farming and garden tools, seeds, lawn mowers, King Arthur flour, a variety of choice dairy products, and Moxie Nerve Food. James was a prominent member of the community, as was his son Selwin, who served as a member of the Board of Selectmen and a member and officer of the Republican Town Committee. James died August 3, 1906.



7. Stone-arch bridge

Osgood Street

1830s /1869/1876

Most of the early wooden bridges over the Spicket were replaced in the 1830s by stone arch bridges. On Osgood Street, the single arch bridge below the falls, built in 1831, was rebuilt in 1869 and 1876.



8. Red Winn Bridge

Osgood Street

This bridge commemorates the life and accomplishments of Walter "Red" Winn. Red was a pillar of the Methuen community and a longtime building manager at the Nevins Memorial Library.



9. Methuen Co. Mills and Methuen Falls

47 Osgood Street

1826-82

The first known reference to the mill on the falls was in a deed belonging to David Nevins. The deed, from the widow of John Morrill, dated December 1709, was conveyed to Robert Swan, for the sum of thirty pounds, one-fourth of a saw mill and land "on Spicket river falls, the mill that was built by and belonged to and amongst Robert Swan, John Morrill and Elisha Davis." Two grist mills were built later. The first cotton mill, built by Stephen Minot, was constructed in 1814 and burned in 1818. In 1821, the land and water privileges were purchased by the Methuen Company, which built a new mill in 1826-27, similar to those in Lowell.

The Methuen Company was acquired by David Nevins in 1864. Under Nevins, the Methuen Company quadrupled in size between 1870 and



1881, producing cotton duck, cotton flannel, ticking, awnings, and jute bags. Increases in production required additional water power, and in 1880, the old wooden dam was replaced by a new dam built of granite from Nevins' Salem, N.H. quarry on Lowell St. The Methuen Company remained in business into the twentieth century and was

for a time part of the Arlington Mills. By the 1930s, the buildings were rented for other industrial uses. The Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites states that the Methuen Mills complex is one of the best



preserved textile mill sites in the lower Merrimack Valley. According to the October 1898 Transcript, the center portion of the present dam was built in 1880 by David Crockett. It replaced the old wooden dam, located about 12 feet upstream. The stone came from a Salem, N.H. quarry owned by David Nevins. Semicircular holes were carved from the tops and bottoms of each stone so that a cannonball could be fitted between each layer for reinforcement. The dam is about 140 feet long with the highest fall of water being about 23 feet. The lower right-hand section was constructed about 1870 by Mr.

Simmons, a Lawrence contractor. A contemporary photograph shows the dam with a wooden walkway, completed in November 1880.



10. Central Fire Station

24 Lowell Street

1899/ c.1930

Methuen's first fire apparatus was bought and the Spiggott Engine Company created in 1847. A steam engine, purchased in 1870, led to organization of the E. A. Straw Company in 1871. The Mystic Hose Company was organized to man a hose carriage purchased in 1878. In 1887, the town voted to purchase a hook and ladder truck, manned by the C. H. Tenney H. & L. Company. Edward F. Searles donated a new hose wagon to the town in 1891 and the Mystic Hose Company was renamed the Paul Methuen Hose Company.

Fire apparatus was first kept in an engine house built around 1847 to house the hand tub "Spigot," which was located on the island on the south side of Lowell Street. That building was unable to accommodate equipment purchased after 1870, so the hose wagon and hook and ladder were kept in

the basement of the town house on 290 Broadway. The long-needed Central Fire Station was built in 1899 to house the steamer, hook and ladder, and hose wagon. The sounding of the alarm activated the electric lights and opened the doors of the horses' stalls so that the horses could take their places under harnesses which were suspended from the ceiling. The station was designed by Lawrence architect John Ashton.



11. Patriots Bridge

Lowell St

1832/2000

The town of Methuen began planning the widening of Lowell Street in 1909. The old stone bridge was reconstructed and the old fire house of 1846/47, located on the island on the east side of Lowell Street, was demolished. Work on the road and the new bridge was completed in October of 1910. The electric car tracks were re-laid and improvements included new iron fences along the bridge and safe sidewalks. An 1836 lithograph shows a wooden bridge. Most of the early wooden bridges over the Spicket were replaced in the 1830s by stone arch bridges. On Lowell Street, the bridge at the island, built in 1832, was first widened and rebuilt in 1869.

12. Canoe Livery Island/ Harris Boat house site

Lowell St

c.1900

This site held a canoe livery that people could rent and explore the Spicket River north of the Methuen Falls Dam.



13. Nevins/Swan House site/ Quinn Public Safety Building

Address: Hampshire St



The original house was building in the 1680s for the Swan family. Eventually, Methuen Industrialist and Boston investor David Nevins purchased the old farm house and expanded it for his needs. The final Nevins owner was Harriet Nevins, who donated it to the MSPCA who created a rest home for horses. The farm house was used by the director to stay when visiting the farm.



14. Nevins Memorial Library

305 Broadway

c. 1883

The Nevins Library is significant as a well preserved institutional building, the only public/private library in Methuen. It was built as a result of the philanthropy of the family of mill owner David Nevins and was designed by a recognized architect, Samuel J. F. Thayer.

This building was donated to Methuen by the Nevins family, who are associated with the development of the Methuen Cotton Mills, the infamous Pemberton mill of Lawrence, and numerous ventures, including Nevins Park, a residential section near the Library grounds. The Library on a landscaped tract with many imported trees and botanical specimens, The Nevins family graves are at the rear of the library, marked by a boulder and plaque. An 1896 statue by C. Moretti titled, "Angel of Life," is situated near the grave site.

15. Red Tavern

5 Pleasant Street

1900

In 1897, Edward F. Searles acquired the property of S. Q. Hersey including the Exchange Hotel on Broadway, the adjoining hotel livery stable, and a house facing on Pleasant Street. In 1900 he created a private guest house called the Red Tavern, which is said to have been made up out of several earlier houses. This reworking and moving of existing buildings was a common practice of Searles and his architect, Henry Vaughan who was responsible for the renovations. In 1909 the Methuen Transcript reported that the Red Tavern had recently been opened to the public, providing English style accommodations. It was run for Searles by Carrie Barnes, his house keeper for many years. According to Smith B. Williams, Searles left the Red Tavern to Mrs. Barnes in his will.



The Red Tavern was purchased by Howard Freedman in 1946, who made several additions. According to advertising material from that period, the Red Tavern had 21 rooms, many of which were paneled in oak or walnut. Several rooms had large fire places and the decor continued to reflect an English theme.

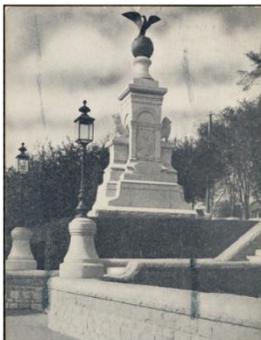


16. Civil War Memorial and Park

Charles Street

1888

The Civil War Monument, in its time called a "model of taste", was given to the town of Methuen by Charles H.



Tenney, local benefactor and highly respected member of the community. Tenney came to Methuen in 1868 and started building his fortune with the C. H. Tenney Hat Factory. He later opened a commission house in New York. Returning to Methuen in the summers, he built a magnificent stone residence in the 1890s called "Grey Court" (37 Pleasant St) on the hill overlooking the monument site.

The site was deeded to the town in 1887 and by November of that year the stone work for the monument had been completed. Thomas Ball is said to be the sculptor. The Dedication took place on July 24, 1888 and was reported in complete detail in the Methuen Transcript.



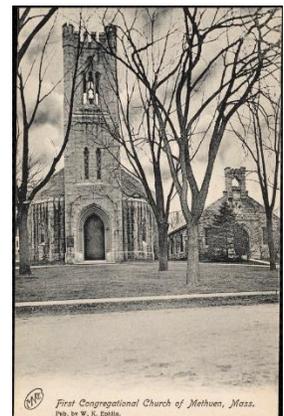
17. The First Congregational Church

26 Pleasant Street

September 1881

In 1880, the Methuen Transcript reported that architect C. W. Damon of Haverhill completed plans for the Congregational Vestry (Phillips Chapel), which was to be built of stone, 30 x 73 feet. While the new building was under construction, the old one was to remain in use. It was moved to a vacant site in front and later to a site on Railroad Street owned by David Nevins. The old vestry was used for a few years as a Mission School.

C. Willis Damon, was born in Pawtucket, R.I. and died in Haverhill in 1916. He was a graduate of M.I. T. and taught drawing in the Boston Public Schools before joining his brother Charles Page Damon to form the firm of Damon Brothers. C. Wills Damon seems to be the better known of the two and is credited with design of the Haverhill City Hall, Portsmouth Court House and Tilton Seminary in New Hampshire. Locally he was responsible for the Phillips Vestry of the First Congregational Church, a house for Daniel W. Tenney at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Street, the Tenney Stock Stable and



renovations to the Tenney Gate House. Local carpenter Jesse A. Towne did the carpentry work and a new Sanborn furnace, made locally was installed to heat the building.

The cornerstone was laid in September 1881 without ceremony. On May 13, 1882, the Rev. J. H. Selden was ordained in the church. The Transcript story of the ordination was accompanied by a cut of the church which showed the old vestry.



18. Tenney Gatehouse

37 Pleasant Street

1830/1883

According to Ernest Mack of the Methuen Historical Commission, the house at 37 Pleasant Street was built by Richard Whittier (brother of Ebenezer Whittier) between August and November of 1830. Originally a rough stone farm house, the building was purchased in April 1882 by Charles H. Tenney, who converted it to the elegant gate



house which is presently being restored by the Tenney Gate House Assoc.

The Methuen Transcript reported on September 1, 1883 that the veneer of cut stone, a tower, and other Queen Anne style features were being added.

Architect C. Willis Damon, who also designed the Stock Stable for Charles Tenney, was born in Pawtucket, R.I. and died in Haverhill in 1916. He was a graduate of M.I. T. and taught drawing in the Boston Public Schools before joining his brother Charles Page Damon to form the firm of Damon Brothers. C.

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for Daniel W. Tenney at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Street.

Tenney had begun developing his estate, building walls and opening roads in 1882. In the next several years, the roads were macadamized, ponds built, ornamental trees planted. Additional property was acquired for the estate, which eventually totaled 75 acres. The name Fair View Park and Grey Court, begun in 1890 was completed three years later. The gate house is the only structure of the extensive estate to survive intact and can be seen in many of the historic photographs of Grey Court.

This building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, and meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.



19. Searles Building

41 Pleasant Street

1904

The Searles High School was built in 1904 for the Town of Methuen by local millionaire and community benefactor Edward F. Searles. It was designed by Henry Vaughan who also responsible for other Searles commissions such as the Serlo Organ Hall (1899-1909), the Central School (1904), All Saints Episcopal Church (1904), and the Railroad Station (1908). The building remained a High School until it was replaced by the new Tenney High School in 1952. It became an elementary school until 1975 and school department offices until 1983. The building was then sold to the Bergmeyer Development Company. They developed the building for office space, opening in 1986. In 1992, the building was repurchased by the town for possible use as a town hall. This building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, and meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.



20. Tenney & Company Shoe Factory

2 Charles Street

1868

In 1846, there were four houses on Charles Street, none of which remain. Of the existing houses on the south side of the street, all but two date from the 1860s and 1870s. On the north side, the four story Tenney & Company shoe

factory was built in 1868 during a period of post-Civil War expansion by brothers George W. and Daniel W. Tenney, who formed Tenney and Co. in 1865. They worked in a small shop on Hampshire Street until 1868 when their new, four-story factory building with "French roof" at 2 Charles Street was completed. According to the 1885 Sanborn Insurance map, the first floor was used for cutting, the second for upper cutting, the third for stitching and dressing and the fourth for buttoning. The Tenney brothers continued together in business until their retirement in 1888, after which the building was sold to other manufacturing interests.



Daniel W. Tenney and George W. Tenney, born 1832 and 1835 respectively in Salem, New Hampshire, were sons of John Tenney and Hannah Woodbury. Daniel lived at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Street and George directly across the street. George's house was built in 1892; Daniel's, which was designed by Haverhill architect C. W. Damon, in 1879. Brothers J. Milton Tenney and Charles H. Tenney were in the hat business, C. H. Tenney and Company, beginning in 1869.



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