

# Munjoy Hill, Portland, Maine



In the 1990s and in 2003 Landmarks undertook initial survey and research of the historic resources on Munjoy Hill. This map from 2003 illustrates the buildings that then identified as possibly contributing to a potential historic district on the hill.

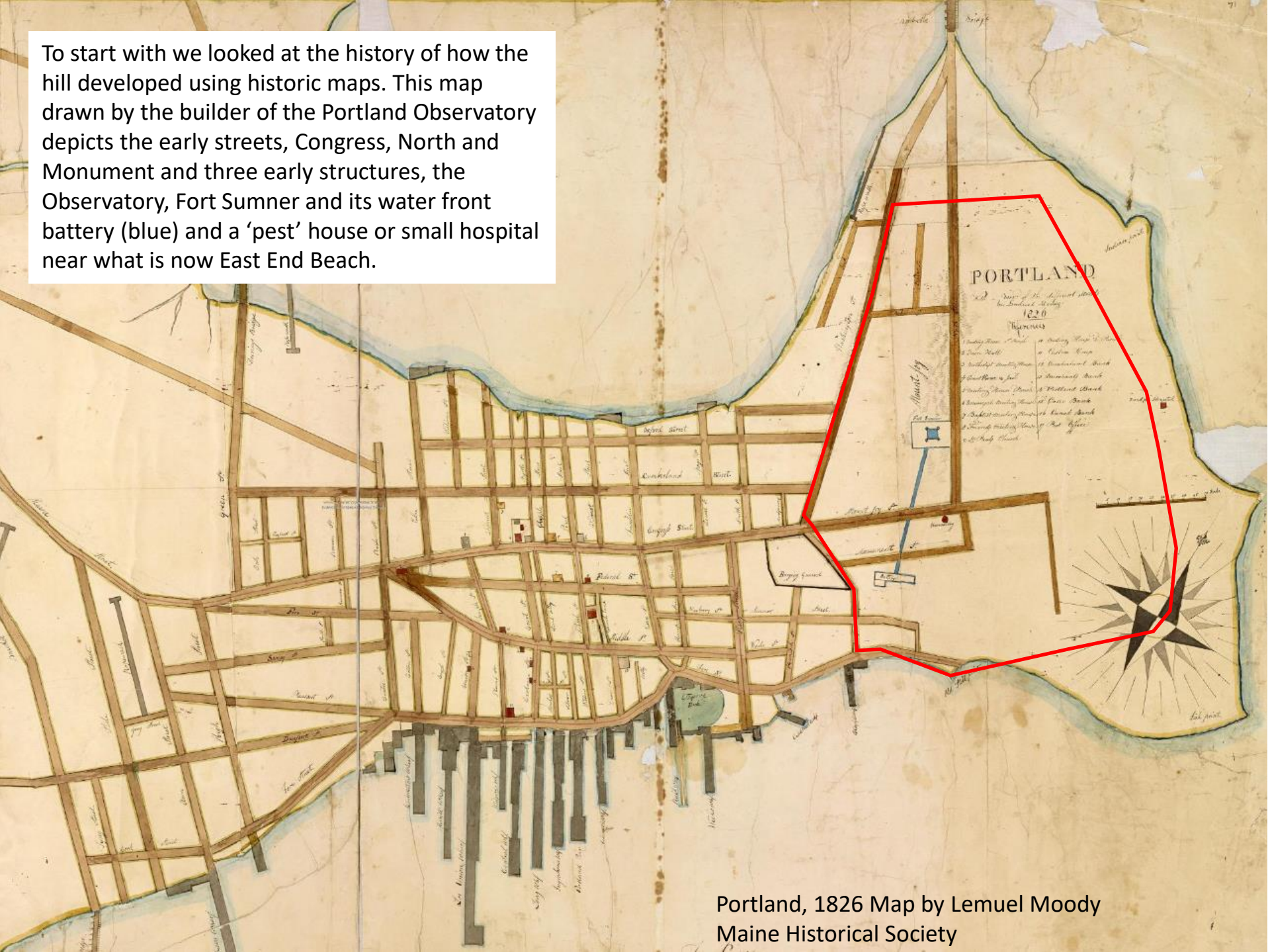
The yellow and orange colors indicate parcels where the buildings would contribute to a potential district. Red parcels are landmark properties. Brown parcels would be non-contributing buildings in a potential district.

We decided to look at the neighborhood in 2017 and see if this map still made sense given changes on the hill in the last 15 years.

## 2003 Landmarks Survey

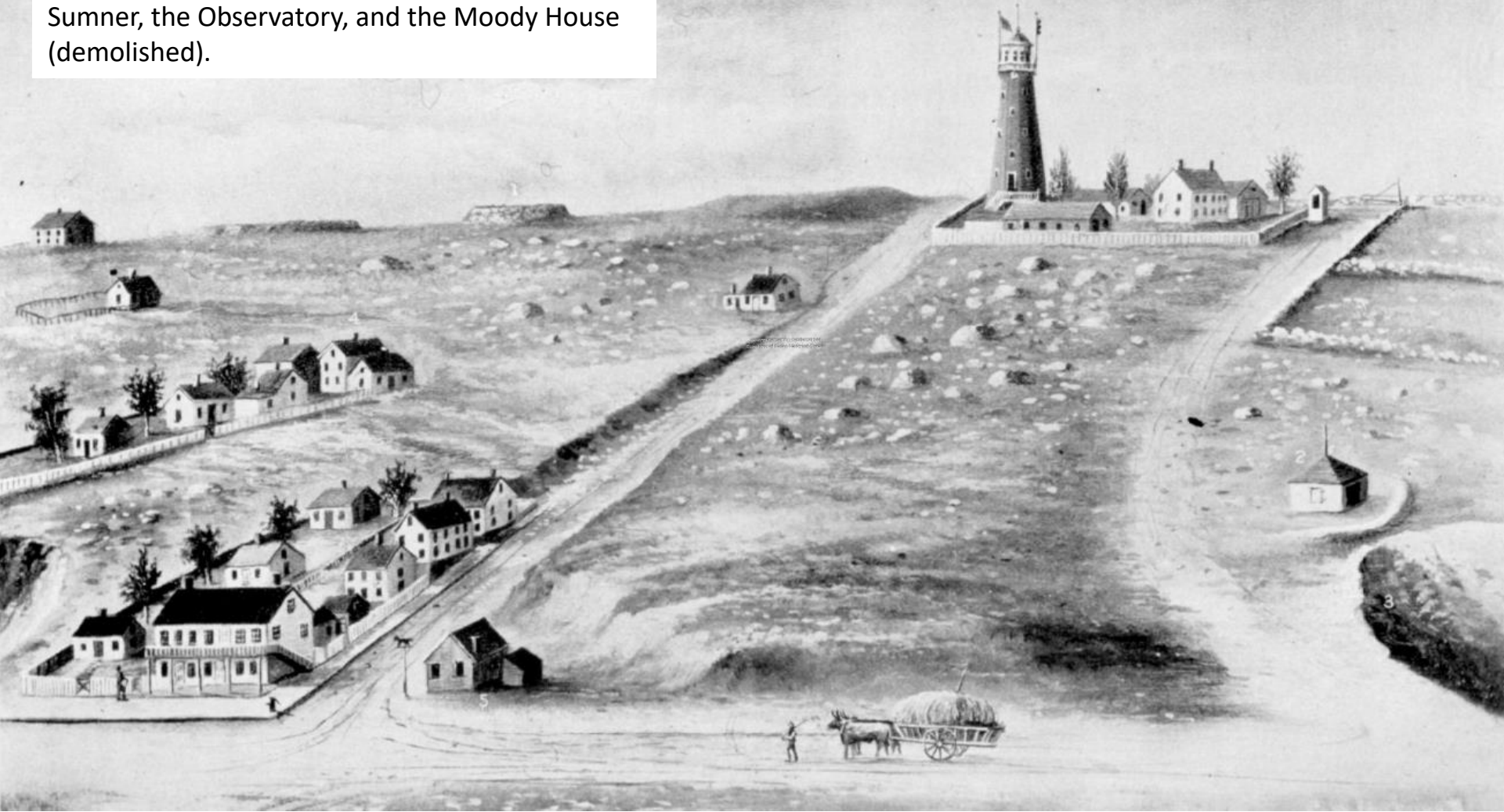


To start with we looked at the history of how the hill developed using historic maps. This map drawn by the builder of the Portland Observatory depicts the early streets, Congress, North and Monument and three early structures, the Observatory, Fort Sumner and its water front battery (blue) and a 'pest' house or small hospital near what is now East End Beach.



Portland, 1826 Map by Lemuel Moody  
Maine Historical Society

This sketch depicts the few structures on Munjoy Hill in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (left to right): The Gould-Clark House on North Street (extant), Fort Sumner, the Observatory, and the Moody House (demolished).



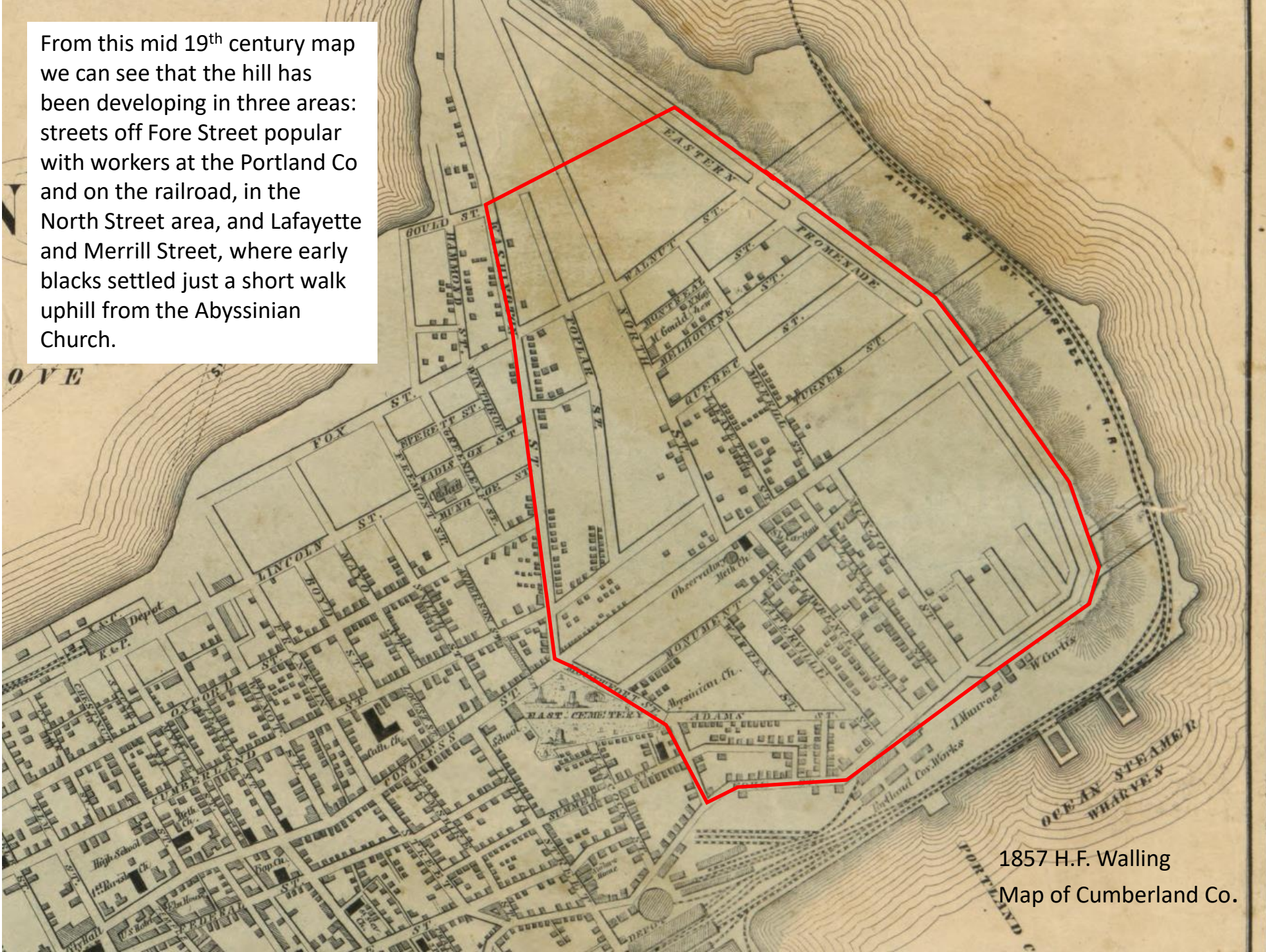
Munjoy Hill, 1840s Sketch by Charles Goodhue

Although there were a few structures, the hill was mainly a place for grazing animals in the stone lined meadows. This sketch depicts the few structures on Munjoy Hill looking from the prom uphill in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (left to right): The Observatory, several small residences on Congress Street, and in the foreground the old 'pest' hospital.



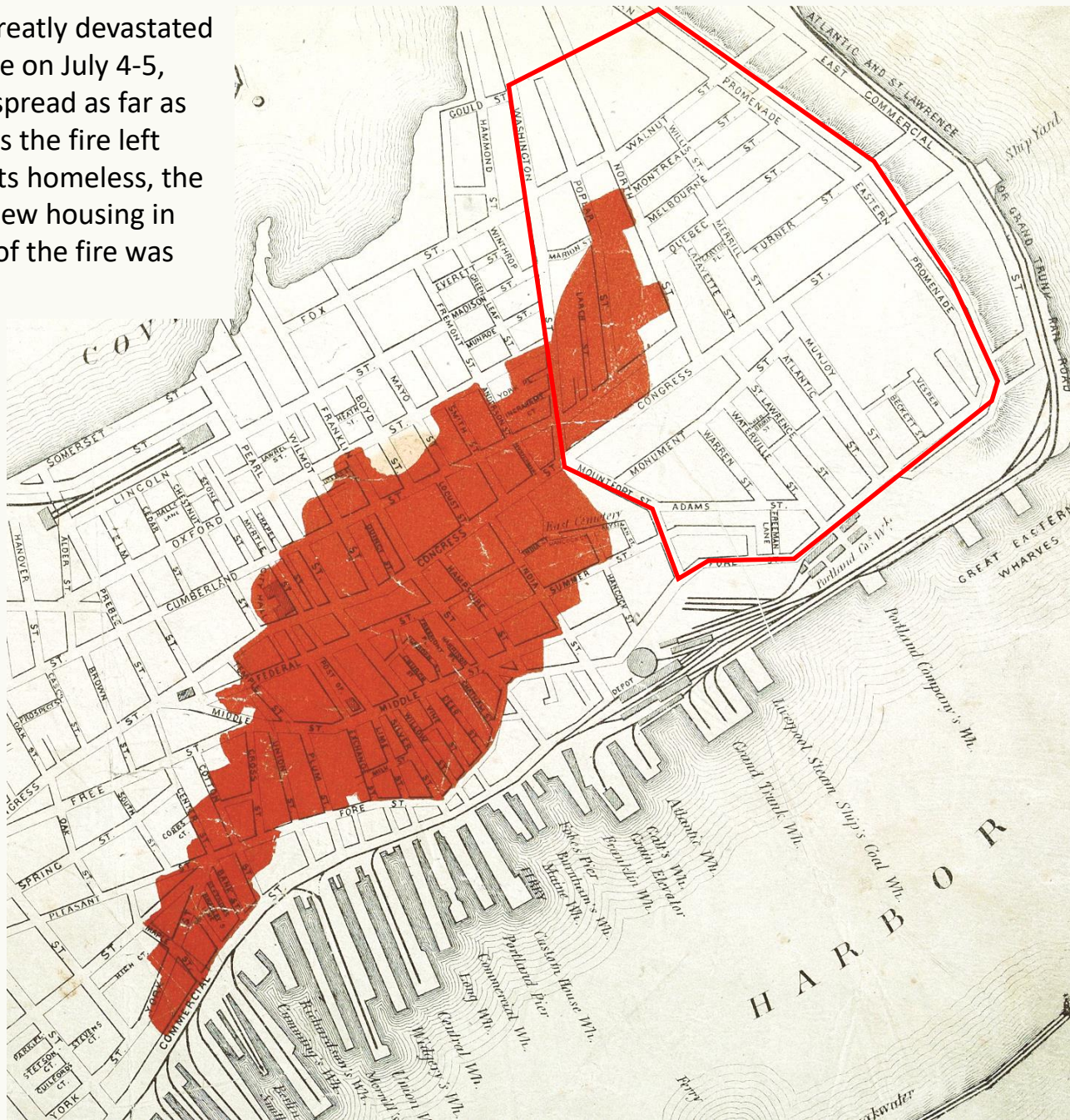
Munjoy Hill, 1840s Sketch by Charles Goodhue

From this mid 19<sup>th</sup> century map we can see that the hill has been developing in three areas: streets off Fore Street popular with workers at the Portland Co and on the railroad, in the North Street area, and Lafayette and Merrill Street, where early blacks settled just a short walk uphill from the Abyssinian Church.



1857 H.F. Walling  
Map of Cumberland Co.

Portland was greatly devastated in the Great Fire on July 4-5, 1866. The fire spread as far as North Street. As the fire left 10,000 residents homeless, the need to build new housing in the aftermath of the fire was tremendous!

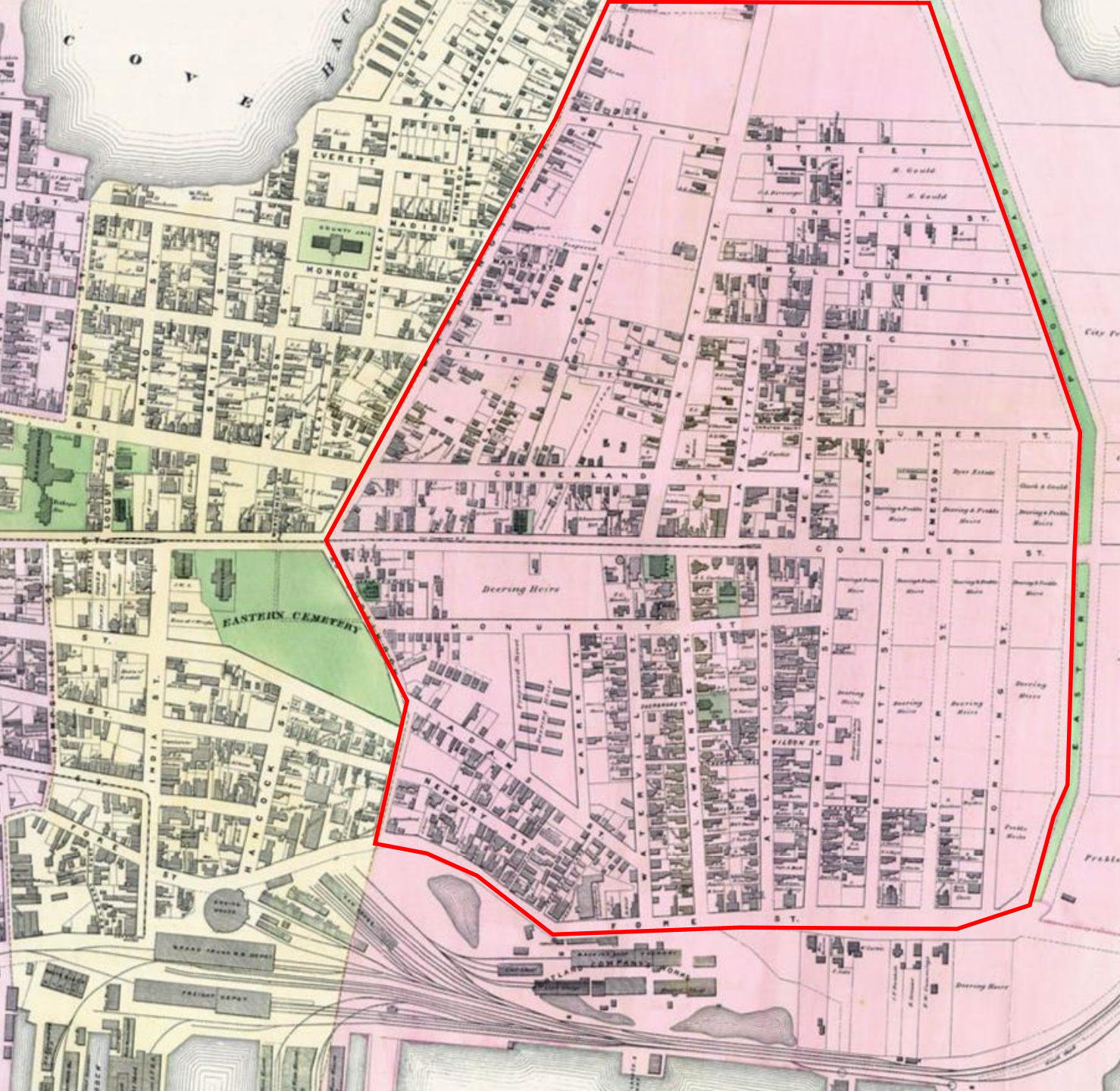


After the Great Fire on July 4-5, 1866, temporary housing was created in the open fields on the hill using Army tents. This image is taken from the Observatory looking back toward India Street and the waterfront.



1866 Stereograph view by J.P. Soule





The Hill was a safe and popular place for rebuilding after the fire, away from the commercial and industrial downtown. New streets were laid out and housing created to quickly house those left homeless in the fire. Note the temporary barracks-style housing still standing just east of the cemetery in this 1871 map. Development on the hill was spurred by the horse cars that ran up the center of Commercial Street as far as the top of the hill.

1871 F.W. Beers & Co.  
Map of Cumberland Co.

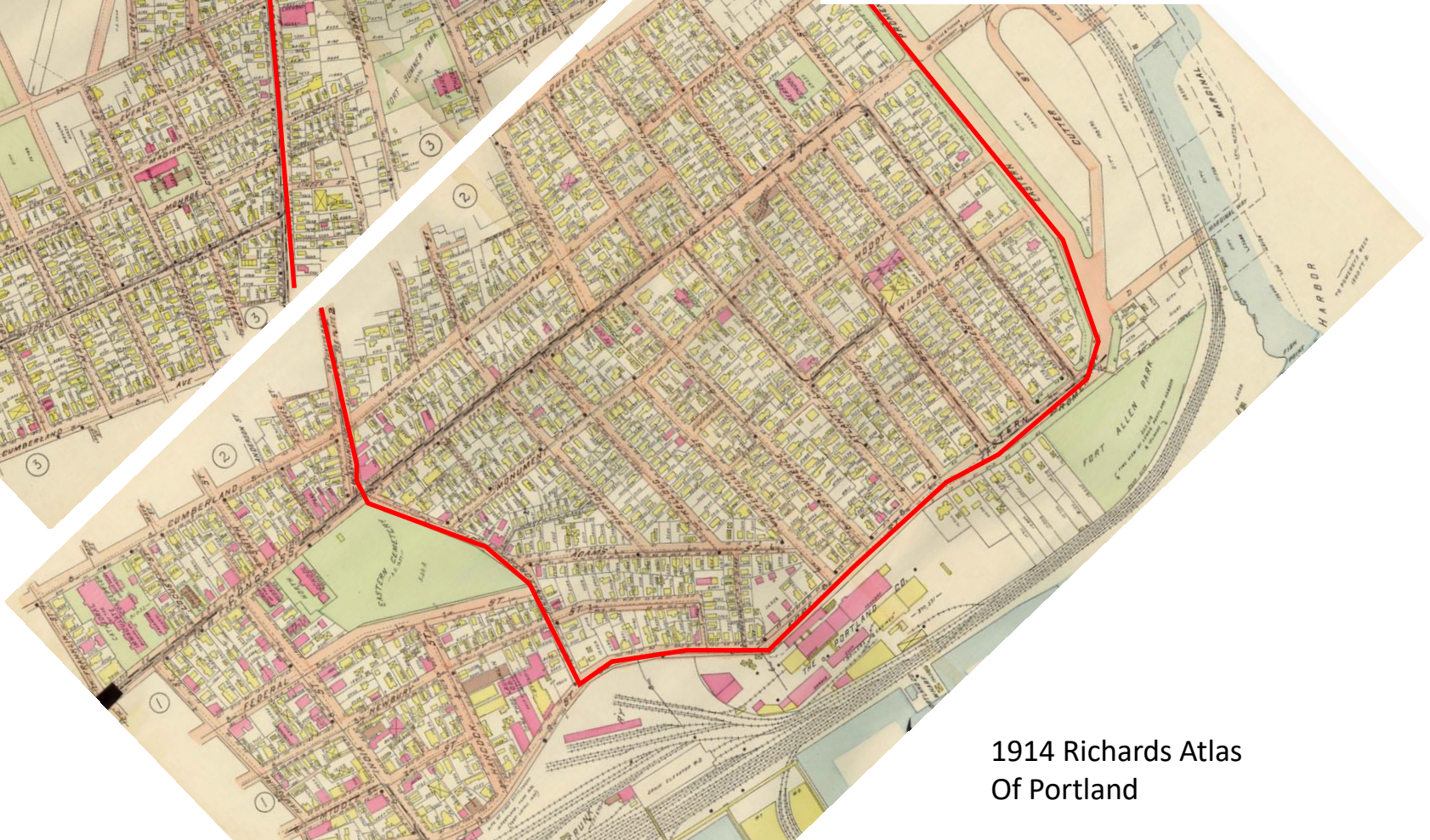
This c1900 image overlooks the area once occupied by tents following the Great Fire of 1866, illustrating the development of this side of the hill in that period. So few trees!



View of Munjoy Hill, c1900



This two part map illustrates how built out Munjoy Hill was by 1914. Note the reservoir, built to help fight future fires and the expansion of the street car system from Congress Street, down Munjoy and then up through the neighborhood back to Congress Street. The old car barn was on the site later occupied by the Marada Adams school, now a park.



1914 Richards Atlas  
Of Portland



## Historic Significance: Telling The Story Of The Hill's Development & Its Residents

The maps and images help us understand why each street and neighborhood on the hill has a unique and sometimes eclectic character.

# Neighborhood North of Fore Street



The area north of Fore Street developed in the 1840s and 1850s as it was developed to house residents that worked on the waterfront or at the newly established Portland Co. and St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad. Many of the dwellings are Greek Revival or early Italianate dwellings. Several examples of early outbuildings remain.



## Sheridan Street

Near the intersection of Sheridan Street and Cumberland Avenue is a collection of early working class homes largely built after the 1866 fire on small lots. These dwellings are generally smaller in scale and more vernacular in character than those further up the hill.



## Early Dwellings & Later Infill on North Street



The North Street area also developed in the 1840s and 1850s as it connected Congress Street to East Deering via Tukey's Bridge. The Great Fire of 1866 stopped at North Street, sparing many of the early homes from destruction. Following the fire, the infill development occurred between the earlier Greek Revival and Italianate homes. A number of the multi family Second Empire and Italianate dwellings were built in the aftermath of the 1866 fire to shelter the newly homeless.



## Early development on the North Side of the Hill



Between North Street and the Eastern Prom, the lots were laid out by real estate developers in 1857 and 1858. Some early small scale farmhouses and larger scale dwellings remain from this period. Among the earlier homes is infill development from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly closer to the Eastern Prom.





# African American Resources

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onward the neighborhood on Lafayette and Merrill Streets was home to a number of Portland's black residents, many of whom worked on Portland's waterfront or in nearby businesses. While some black residents were native to Maine, many were from Canada, particularly from Nova Scotia. Others came to Portland from Guadeloupe, Jamaica, Cape Verde, West Indies, Portugal, and other states like North Carolina, Virginia, New York, Wisconsin, and Georgia.



## Buildings & Sites with African American Associations

46 Sheridan Street, Green Memorial AME Zion Church, 1914 (National Register, 1972)

Carleton Court (site of)

30 Lafayette Street

39 Lafayette Street (site of)

42 Lafayette Street

43 Lafayette Street

44 Lafayette Street (site of)

46 Lafayette Street

48 Lafayette Street

49 Lafayette Street

50 Lafayette Street

51 1/2 Lafayette Street (Site of)

56 Lafayette Street

19 Merrill street

49 Merrill Street (site of)

50 Merrill Street

65 Merrill Street

24 Montreal Street

15 North Street

52 Quebec Street

84 Congress Street

99 Congress Street

200 Congress Street



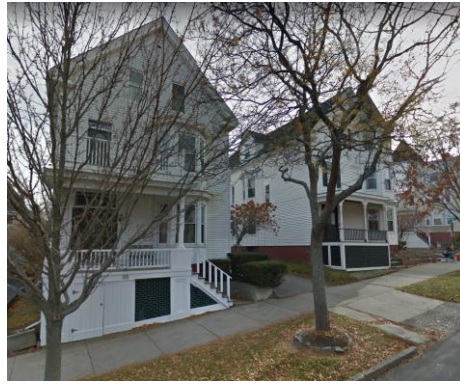
# Eastern Prom



The Eastern Prom largely developed later than the core of neighborhood, since the Deering family heirs that owned much of the land didn't subdivide it until close to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These large Queen Anne and Colonial Revival homes provide a backdrop to the historic landscape of the Eastern Promenade.






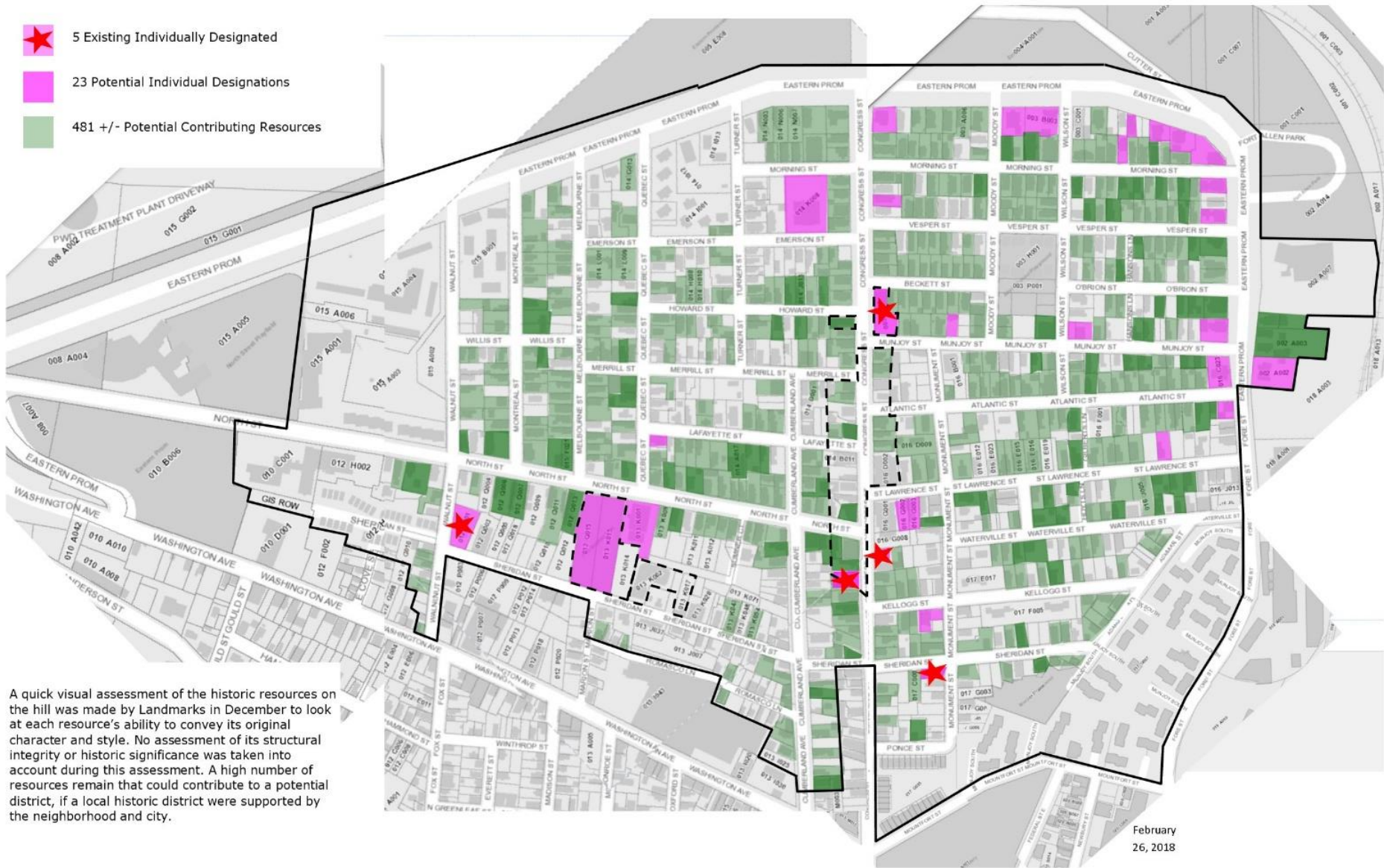
# Turn of the Century Development



In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the immigrant population in Portland increased, there was an increasing need for housing on Munjoy Hill as well as other neighborhoods on the peninsula. Triple deckers or flats and apartment houses were a popular form of housing to increase the density of the neighborhood at the turn of the century. As the Deering family heirs didn't subdivide land along Kellogg Street until 1874 and streets closer to the prom until 1879, these areas tend to have a higher concentration of these later building forms.



-  5 Existing Individually Designated
-  23 Potential Individual Designations
-  481 +/- Potential Contributing Resources



A quick visual assessment of the historic resources on the hill was made by Landmarks in December to look at each resource's ability to convey its original character and style. No assessment of its structural integrity or historic significance was taken into account during this assessment. A high number of resources remain that could contribute to a potential district, if a local historic district were supported by the neighborhood and city.

February  
26, 2018

