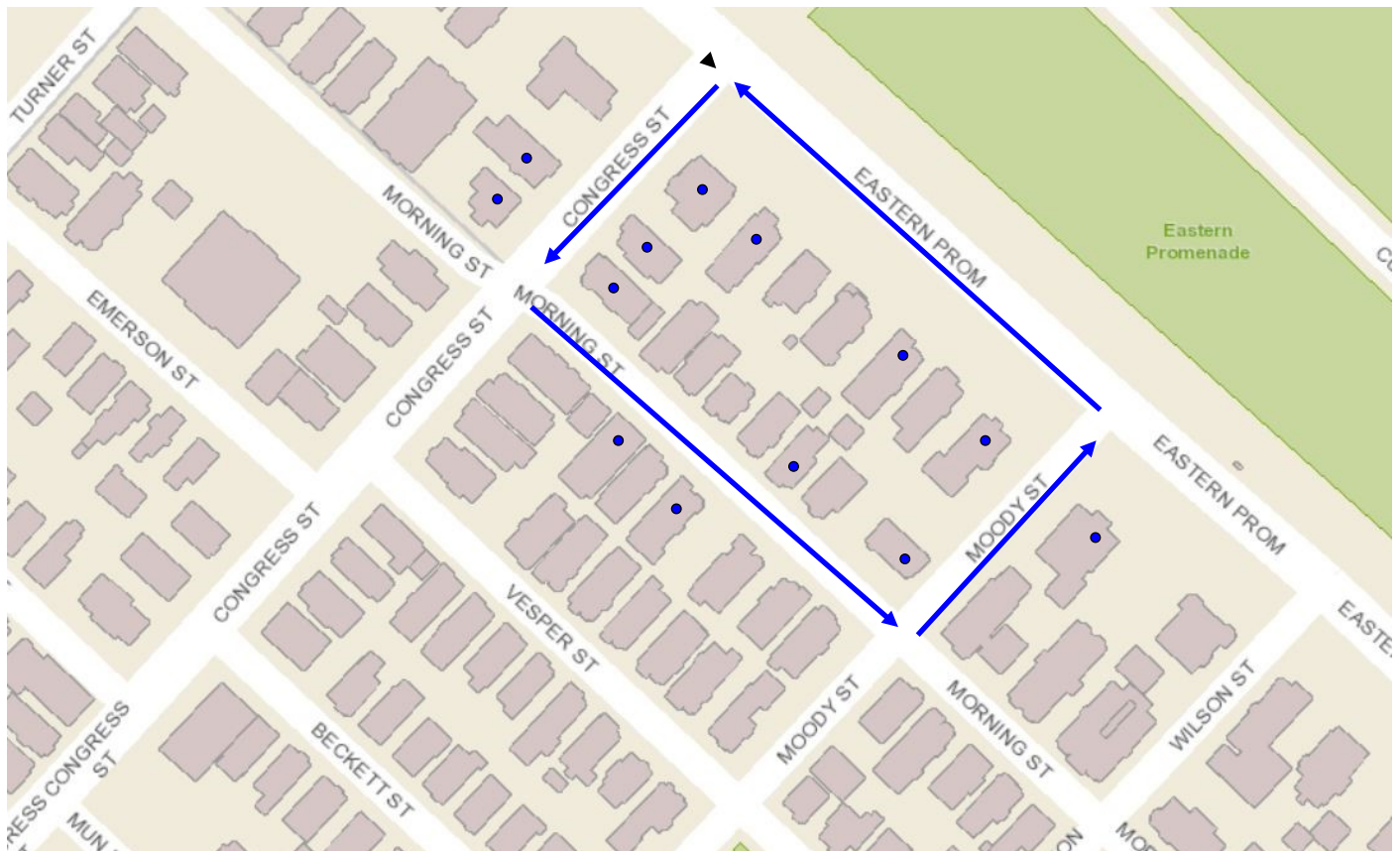


Greater Portland Landmarks' *Walk Around the Block*

The Eastern Promenade Takes Shape: Turn-of-the-Century Development of Munjoy Hill April 9, 2018



Munjoy Hill

Munjoy Hill rises 161 feet above Casco Bay on the eastern end of the Portland peninsula. The Hill's namesake George Munjoy (c1626-1680) settled near present day Mountfort and Fore Streets in 1659. He fled Portland after an Indian attack in 1676 and never returned.

Munjoy Hill was one of the last neighborhoods on the peninsula to be developed because its primary functions from the city's founding in the 1630s until the 1840s were as an occasional gathering place and a pasture for cows.

The Great Fire of July 4th and 5th, 1866 spread from Commercial Street to North Street. It destroyed 1,500 buildings and left over 10,000 people homeless. Following the Great Fire, the city's need for housing drove development on Munjoy Hill. This development was largely middle-class homes, with a few high style residences in the Italianate and Second Empire Style. A few years earlier in 1863 the city's horse drawn street car line had reached Munjoy Hill helping to make the hillside areas attractive for development after the fire.

By the 1880s, Munjoy, Atlantic and St. Lawrence Streets were largely built out. These long streets extended between Fore to Congress.

The Portland Railroad Co.'s street car line expanded its route on the hill from Congress

Street, down Morning Street to the Eastern Prom. It then wended its way back to Congress Street along Beckett, Wilson, and Atlantic Streets. The company's street cars lines were all electrified by 1896.

Around this same period, wealthy local families began to appreciate the Promenade's sweeping views and erected grand homes in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles opposite the city-owned green space.

Twenty-one of the thirty-three single family homes on the Eastern Promenade were built between 1888-1912.

Between 1895 and 1915 triple deckers or flat houses were built in large numbers on Munjoy Hill. They are particularly prevalent on Morning, Vesper and Beckett Streets, as well as Sheridan and Kellogg Streets.

The land on Morning, Vesper and Beckett Streets was owned by the Deering and Fessenden families and some of the last vacant land to be laid out on the hill. The triple-deckers and the few apartment buildings built during this period were dense residential building types that housed the Hill's increasing immigrant population from Italy and Northern and Eastern Europe.

Eastern Promenade

In 1836 Portland's civic leaders took steps to assure that all of its citizens would have access to an attractive public green space along the water by obtaining the first parcels of land that would become the Eastern Promenade, despite public outcry at the waste of public money.

Land acquisition continued over the century, and in 1904-05, Mayor James Phinney Baxter engaged the Olmsted firm, the premier landscape design firm in the country, to envision how the Promenade could become an even more attractive city asset.

While the Olmsted plan was never fully implemented, the Prom remains an unparalleled historic public landscape, noted for its beauty and its extensive use for recreation, including July 4th fireworks. In 2003, the City of Portland completed a master plan for the eastern Promenade, and in 2006 Friends of the eastern Promenade formed to help implement the plan.

Architectural Character of the Street

The street is mainly comprised of two-and-a-half and three story dwellings. Most dwellings are Colonial Revival or Queen Anne in style, with some examples of the Italianate, Second Empire, and Shingle styles.



Firemen's Muster 1897

Cleeves Monument

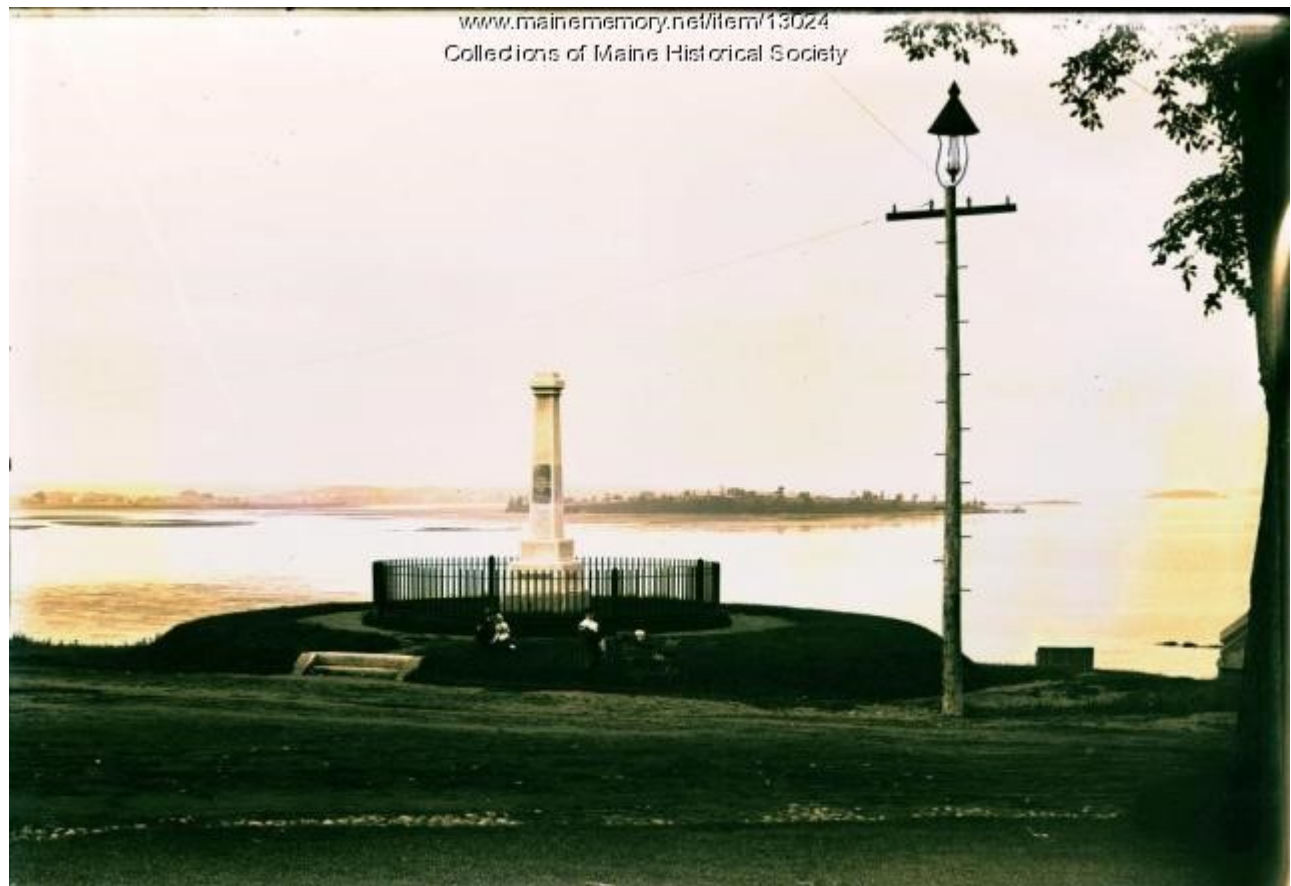
The first public monument sited in Portland is the Cleeves and Tucker Memorial, erected in 1883 and situated at the end of Congress Street and Eastern Promenade.

This obelisk, designed by William Goodwin, an engineer in Frederick Law Olmstead's firm, was intended to provide an aesthetic foreground for viewing Casco Bay.

It was donated to the city by Payson Tucker, a descendant of Richard Tucker, to commemorate the Cleeves and Tucker families, thought to be the first settlers of Machigone Neck, one of the original names of Portland. Sir Fernando Gorges, an English lord awarded the Province of Maine by King James I, granted them the right to fish and trade here.

The obelisk is made from granite quarried from North Jay, Maine. The same granite was used for Portland City Hall.

Engraved on the four sides of the monument are the four names for the city of Portland at one time: Machigone, Casco, Falmouth, and Portland. Also engraved are George Cleeves' and Richard Tucker's names and the names of the women in their families, an unusual addition for the times.



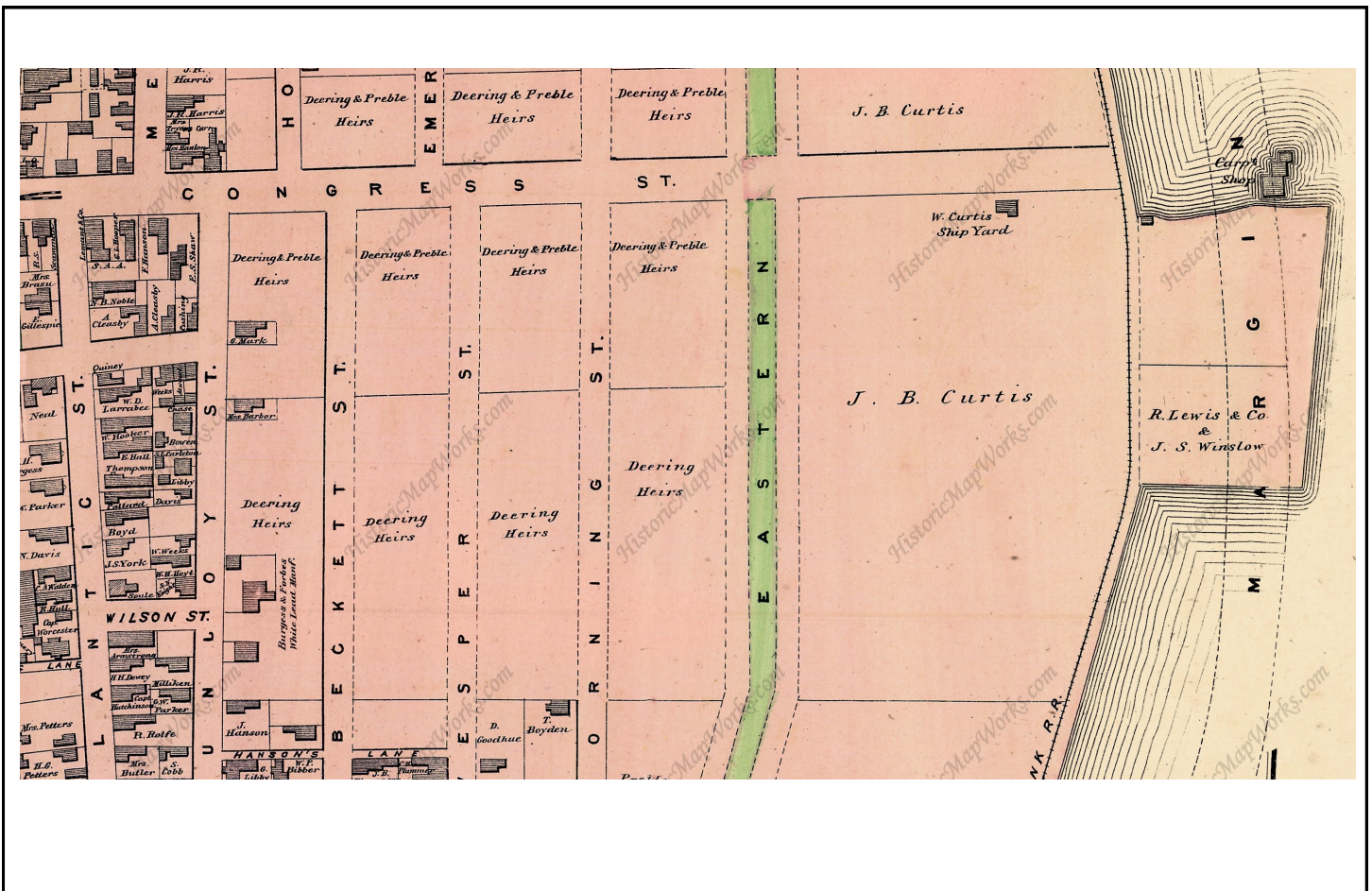
Congress Street

Originally known as Back Street, reflecting its position to other early streets, Fore and Middle, it later was known as Queen Street and extended up Munjoy Hill in 1792 as far as a stone wall and gate near the present day intersection with Washington Avenue.

It appears to have been first called Congress Street by city government in 1836 when it was extended to the Eastern Promenade.

Plans for development of eastern Congress Street were submitted in 1879 and 1884. With very few exceptions, the first purchasers were builders who described themselves as house carpenters or masons. Usually these men lived on Munjoy Hill themselves and nearly all the homes were designed for at least two families.

The first resident owners included many long-time Maine families: Marden, Libby, Fickett, Straw, Richards.



32 Congress Street c. 1892

Francis Fessenden sells a lot to Everett Johnson, a “carpenter,” who immediately sells to Arthur H. Marden. The Marden family owned and lived in the two-family dwelling for the first half century after it’s construction.

In 1880 Arthur Marden is a clerk in a shoe store on India Street. A year later he married and became a shoe merchant himself with a boot and shoe shop at 383 Congress Street until his retirement in 1920. The Marden’s almost always had boarders and lodgers in their building—a retired Board of Health inspector, elderly single women with companion/housekeeper, or young men listed as clerks in the shoe business.

Marden’s son sold the property almost immediately after inheriting in 1946. By 1960 it was owned by a US post office employee Francis Caterina.

The longest single owner in the post WWII ear was Rose DiMillo. Rose and her husband Eugene had been born in Italy and emigrated in the 1920s. Eugene was a street construction laborer. Rose was the first owner who was not also an occupant. She lived in a small shop/apartment building on Washington Ave while working at “Bill’s Cash Market” and supplemented her income with rental of the building.

The house has had three sets of owners since Rose sold it in 1992.



33 Congress Street, c1901

This property has shown remarkable consistency in ownership since it was built in the early 1900's, with two families—Hilton and Turesky— in possession nearly the entire time.

The first owner, Theara Hilton purchased the lot from Henry Deering while he with his wife and son were renting at 3 North Street. Hilton was an apothecary. For decades Theara Hilton Drugs was located down the street at 129 Congress. Hilton usually rented out a portion of his house. In 1910 the tenant was a packer in the corn industry with a wife and twin daughters. A recently arrived Irish girl served as live-in maid.

In the 1930s Hilton shared the house with his 30 year old son, also a druggist, and his family of four, a 17-year old nursemaid, and a single woman in her forties who managed a doll hospital.

After Hilton died the house went into foreclosure and in 1947 it was bought by Solomon Turesky.

Both Solomon and his wife had been born in Polish Russia in the late 19th century. Yiddish speaking, they married and emigrated to the US in the early 1900's. He was a merchant in the clothing trade. His WWI draft document describes him as slender, of medium height, with blue eyes and dark hair.

His grandson, David Turesky, has been the current owner since 1982.



35 Congress Street, c 1892

Albert Perry, a travelling salesman and merchant in the silk trade, was the first owner of the house. Born in 1850, he married in 1872 and according to the 1900 census he lived in the house with his wife, daughter and a teenage nephew who worked as a clerk in a jewelry store. By 1910 his daughter, Inez, is married and raising two small children in the house with the help of a Canadian live-in servant.

After her parents died, Inez sold the property to Michael and Margaret Greene, proud natives, as they told the 1930 census taker, of the Irish Free State. Michael was a building contractor with an office on Congress Street across from City Hall.

Clementine Zappia purchased the house in 1951. She and her fisherman husband John were Italian immigrants who rented just down the street before buying the house.

John and Marion Davis bought the property in 1955 and lived there for 45 years.

The current owner has owned it since 2012.



34 Congress Street, c 1891

The house was built by “brick mason” Jeremiah G. Floyd after he purchased the lot from Francis Fessenden. Floyd, a Maine native, was an active builder in Portland.

In 1895 Floyd sells to Lindsay Griffin who immediately conveys the property to R. Cutler Libby, a successful insurance agent with an office on Exchange Street.

Cutler Libby was also an amateur photographer whose collection of hundreds of photo negatives forms part of the MHS archives.

Herman Libby followed his father in the insurance business. He inherited the property and lived there until 1955 when it was finally sold out of the family, 60 years after its construction.

Multiple generations of Libby family members often lived in the house and there were usually additional renters in residence. In 1910 a US Customs inspector and his wife were lodgers, in 1920, an elderly woman and her companion. Twenty years later the extra space was rented by a young male railroad clerk making \$1,700/year and a single woman also employed by a railroad company making \$1,500/year.

The house was owner-occupied throughout the 20th century by the Carter, Manning and Nichols families.



Morning Street

Morning Street was one of the last streets on the hill to be fully developed and was laid out in part on land owned by members of the Deering family in 1868. However by early 1870s, only the south side of the street closest to the Eastern Prom (Nos. 10-40) had been developed. The remainder of the street was undeveloped until the 1890s. The street was extended across Congress Street in 1892, but wasn't developed until the turn of the century.

Architectural Character of the Street

Morning Street is a fairly homogenous street as most dwellings were developed within a 10-15 year period. Most dwellings are either two-and-a-half stories with a front gable roof or three story "triple-deckers" with a flat or hip roof. Dwellings include examples of the Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and vernacular styles. Roof forms are eclectic with examples of hip, flat and front gable. Dwellings range from two to five bays in width and are built on lower brick or stone foundations.



Trolley on Morning Street, circa 1900. Photograph by R. Cutler Libby

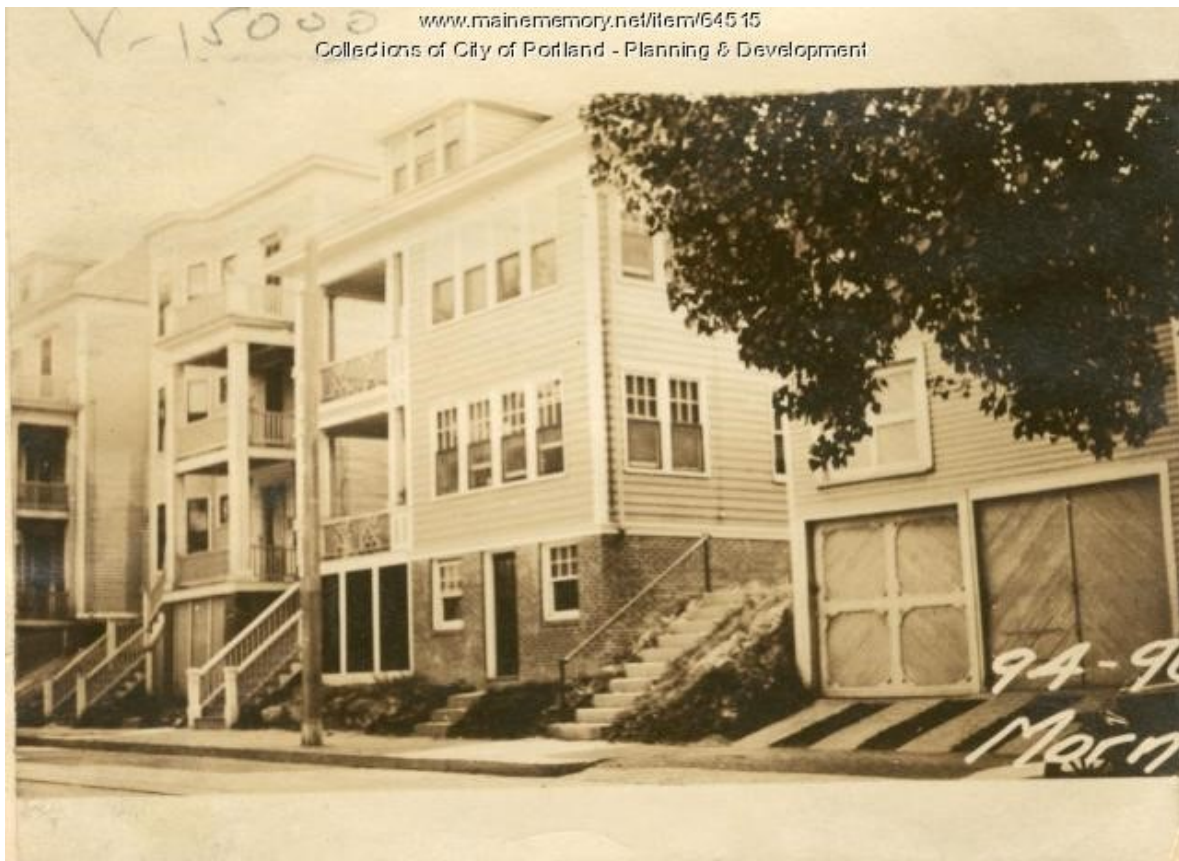
96 Morning Street, c1924

Louis Serota was a contractor who came to Portland c1910 from Russian controlled Poland. He first worked as a cabinet maker and carpenter. His wife Rose and their four children joined him in 1913. He became a contractor and built the synagogue on Congress Street which is one of the oldest remaining European-style synagogues in continuous use in Maine.

From the records it appears that Serota purchased the land from the Deering Heirs in 1925, however, according to Portland tax records, the house was built in 1924 with Serota listed as the owner of the property and the Deering Heirs listed as the owners of the land.

At the same time, Serota is busy buying and mortgaging property in the Forest Ave/Noyes Street area.

Serota sells the property a year later to a Morris Silverman who in turn sells it almost immediately to Simon Rosenbloom. Almost 20 years later Rosenbloom sells to Frances G. Cohen who holds on to it for 20 years before selling it to Bonnie Leotsakos who sells it two years later in 1978 to the current owner.



90 Morning Street c. 1910 Edward E. Cheney Apts., “The Raymond”

This is example of a flat-house or three-decker apartment. Three-deckers were most commonly built in medium to large cities of New England between 1870 and 1920. They were primarily housing for working class families and ranged in price depending on their location, number of rooms, and quality of construction.

They were regarded as much more livable than the tenements and row houses of the larger cities. Renters found the front and back porches and windows all around a vast improvement over cramped, dark tenements. Builders liked them for the economies of stacking identical units under one roof and on one foundation.

This building has an intriguing history. Originally owned by Bessie J. Cheney, not her husband Edward, it was sold to Charles Hudson and Agnes Fairman in 1914. In 1917, Charles and Annie Hudson sell the property to Anna Sacknoff. Annie Hudson is the only surviving child of Agnes Fairman.

Anna Sacknoff owned the property for over 20 years before being foreclosed on by Maine Savings Bank in 1940. In 1941 the Bank sells to Henry Venner who, 11 years later conveys it to Alice Farnham who immediately conveys it back to Henry and his wife Rose. In 1958 Henry and Rose sell to Frank and Elizabeth Gedaro. The Estate of Elizabeth Gedaro conveys it to the current owner in 2009.



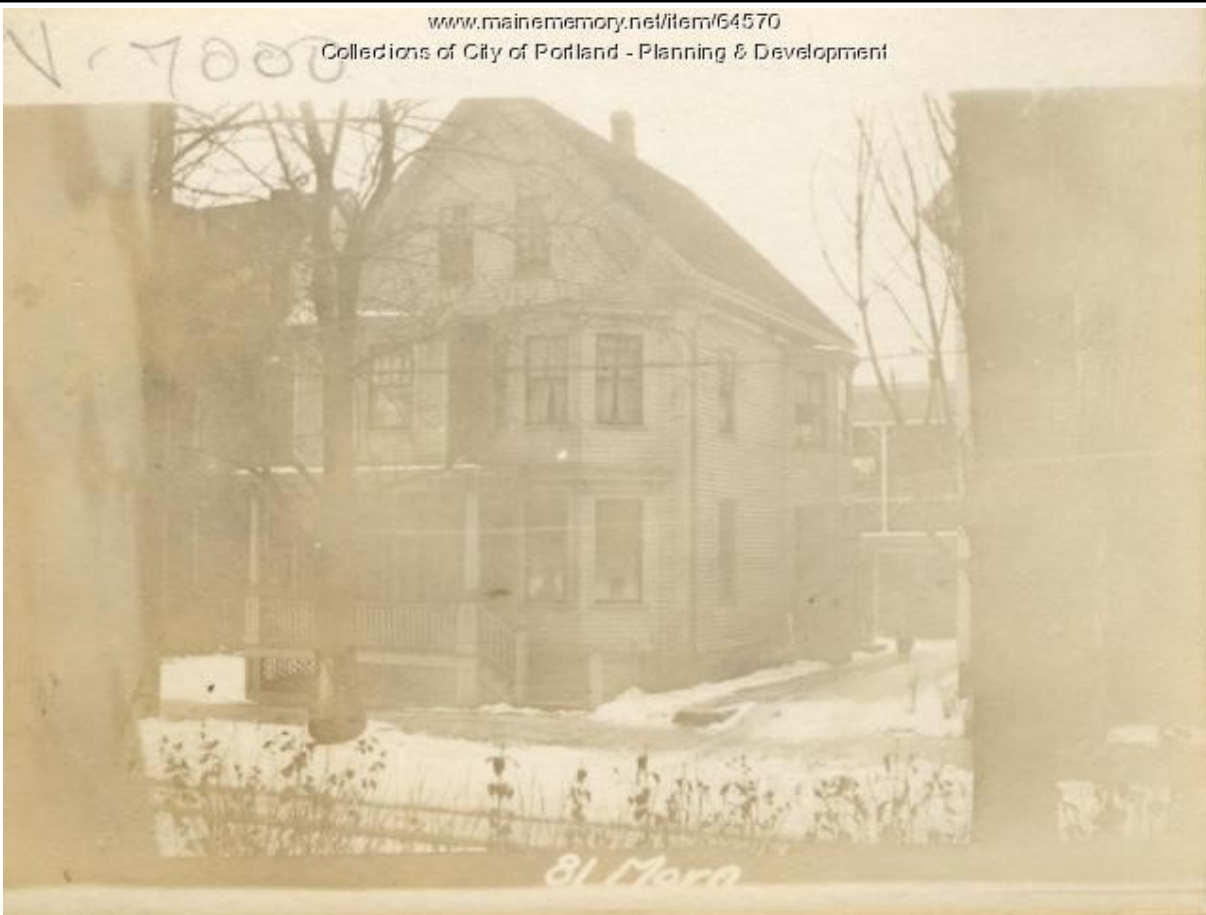
81 Morning Street, c1895

Enoch Richards purchase the property in 1892 but sells it a year later to Joseph Russell. Russell dies intestate and his daughters convey the property to Elias Caplan in 1911. Caplan holds on to the property until 1929 and then sells it to William White. White mortgages the property back to Caplan for \$6,500 and then the property is foreclosed in 1933, in the middle of the Great Depression.

Elias Caplan undergoes hard times and conveys the property to Casco Mercantile Trust Co. in March 1937 and the bank sells it to Ida Cohen seven months later. Ida holds on to the property for almost 20 years before selling to Joseph and Mary Bean who own it for 15 years before selling.

The Nuestein family only owns it 5 years before selling to the Websters who owns it for 16 years. The next owners owned it for over 20 years before selling in it 2016.

Single family home.



11 Moody , 1894-95

Built by Enoch Richards (1854-1944) one of the most prolific builders on Munjoy Hill. We'll see more examples of his homes on the Eastern Prom.

In the early part of the 20th century it seemed you had to be named George in order to own the property. In 1897 Enoch Richards sold the property to George Osgood who sold it to George Blackwell who sold it to George Frye.

In 1924 it was owned by the Estate of George C. Frye, the widower of Eunice Frye. George and Eunice were passionate about philanthropy, particularly in the care of women. Eunice was president of the Wayside Rest or Home for Worthy Women for 25 years. When a new home was built on Capisic Street in 1903, George Frye made a substantial donation to the home on the condition it be renamed the Eunice Frye Home.

In 1925 it was sold to Robert Reiche, the father of Howard C. Reiche, the former principal of Portland High School for whom Reiche school is named.

In 1960 the heirs of Robert Reiche convey the property to the Duffy family and it remains in the family today.



150 Eastern Promenade

John W Griffin and Lindsay B Griffin, brothers and partners in Griffin Bros. wholesale fruit company both had similar Colonial Revival dwellings constructed on the Eastern Prom in the first decade of the 20th century.

The brothers were raised in Freeport, but moved to Portland in the 1880s. Lindsay, the elder brother, married Mary Mildred Fickett in 1886. He built two houses just down the street on the Eastern Prom that we will see at the end of the walk.

John W. married Anne Gilliatt in 1903 and built his Colonial Revival house on the Eastern Prom in 1910. The couple had two children, a daughter Hilda in 1908 and a son John Jr in 1913. John died in 1920 at age 51 at Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary (Bramhall Square) from complications due to cancer.

The brothers' fruit company operated out of the Carroll Block at 136 Commercial Street

The Griffin Bros. company became L.B. Griffin and continued on Commercial Street into the 1940s.





Griffin Brothers Fruit Cart



Griffin Brothers Business at 138 Commercial Street

160 Eastern Prom, 1903-04

Enoch Richards (1854-1944) was one of the most prolific builders on Munjoy Hill. The Richards family moved often as Enoch built and sold homes, In a twenty year period from 1889-1908 city directories list their residence as 91 Beckett Street, 40 Emerson Street, 160 Eastern Prom (1907), and 147 Spring Street.

During the same time period he built 16 houses on Munjoy Hill: 6 on Beckett St. 6 on Vesper Street, 2 on Moody and 2 on the Eastern Prom.

Richards was born in Searsmont, Maine but moved to Portland in his teens with his family. He and his wife had five children. Their son Grover was an electrical contractor. Their daughter Blanche married Frederick Wheeler Hinckley a Portland lawyer, politician and amateur architect. The young couple lived with her parents before moving to South Portland, where they lived at Clyfdale Villa on Sawyer Street and Frederick would serve as mayor in 1919. Hinckley designed and built the Sylvan Site development in South Portland, and served in the Maine Legislature.

Richards sold the property to Barnard Shalit in 1906 who sells three years later to Thomas Towle. Morris Sacknoff purchases the property in 1921 and his heirs sell the property in 1944. In 1957 John & Adeline Itrace acquire the property and sell it in 2008 to the current owners.



166 Eastern Prom, 1903-04

Enoch Richards acquired the property in April of 1899 and a month later conveys it to Catherine J. Menish. Ten years later Catherine conveys it to Morris Maiman beginning a series of short ownerships until 1982.

Some interesting notes, in 1943 Sadie Melamed acquires the property, holds on to it for 10 years and then sells it to Beatrice Mead. Sadie's husband, Trietel, signs the deed with an X.



182 Eastern Prom

John W Griffin and Lindsay B Griffin, brothers and partners in Griffin Bros. wholesale fruit company both had similar Colonial Revival dwellings constructed on the Eastern Prom in the first decade of the 20th century.

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Lindsay also owned a garage at 12 Portland Pier. The Griffin Bros. company became L.B. Griffin and continued on Commercial Street into the 1940s.



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Research: Nancy Ellenberger, Julie Larry, Alessa Wylie

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