

---

A common sight of boys scavenging bananas or other fruit around a box car on Commercial Street identified the Griffin Brothers wholesale fruit company, the largest in Portland. John and Lindsey Griffin, owners of the company lived in identically styled houses on the Promenade overlooking the bay. John lived at the corner of Moody Street Lindsey at the corner of Congress.

Philip Libby owned the Universal Laundry on Cumberland Avenue. Before converting his pickup and delivery service to trucks, Libby kept his horses in the barn next to his house at Morning Street and the Promenade.

Charles Holden lived on the Hill for 90 years before moving to the Park-Danforth Home. He is the grandson of Charles Montgomery who built the big house at 23 St. Lawrence Street as a family home. At that time the family had a well for domestic water as the water main had not yet been laid to that location. Mr. Holden's great grandfather, Dr. William Montgomery, had his office at Congress and Montgomery Street, a street that bears his name. Mr. Holden was a banker for the Casco Mercantile Trust Company. He delights in telling about his boyhood on the Hill: how he was a student in the first class to graduate from the Emerson School and learned to skate on the creek, and swim at the East End Beach. He remembers watching the last ship launched at the East End shipyard, and says that Pete Gaskill was the best ball player in the city. To Mr. Holden, the Hill holds many treasured memories.

The Weislander family lived on Beckett Street, and conducted a successful home decorating business. The son, Fred joined the firm after graduating from Wentworth Institute.

Bertram Silverman joined his father's business after graduating from Bowdoin College. The family, who lived on Melbourne Street, established one of the major textile businesses in the region.

Morris Sacknoff lived on the Eastern Promenade at Moody Street. He conducts a thriving waste paper business. His accountant, William Welch, has been a life-long resident of the Hill.

The largest cooperage in the city was owned by Hyman Finn, a resident of Quebec Street. He bought the Greely Dairy building, adjacent to his house, as a community parking garage. It became the social gathering place for men in the neighborhood during summer evenings.

Early in the nineteenth century a large number of Negro families lived on the lower slope of the Hill and around its base. As the top of the Hill developed into a residential community, several of those families established homes in the new neighborhoods. Most of the Negroes at that time were seamen or longshoremen. John Hill served in the Navy during the War of 1812, and Enoch McLellan was a stevedore. But the families of more recent years entered skilled trades and professions.

David A. Dickson and his wife, Mary, natives of Jamaica, raised a remarkable family in their Lafayette Street home. Their four sons graduated from Bowdoin College. Three of them became medical doctors: Leon, Audley and Frederick. David W. D. Dickson is president of Montclair State College in New Jersey. Their only daughter, Lois, is a member of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.

John (Pete) Gaskill was a well-known baseball player who is mentioned in the chapter on sports. He worked for more than forty years as a lineman for the Cumberland County Power Company. Pete and his wife, Margaret, spend their retirement years as Coast Guard inspectors of small boats, and have commendations for their outstanding work.

James Johnson has taught automotive skills at the South Portland branch of the Maine Vocational Institute. Charles and Caesar Verra held important government jobs before their

---

A common sight of boys scavenging bananas or other fruit around a box car on Commercial Street identified the Griffin Brothers wholesale fruit company, the largest in Portland. John and Lindsey Griffin, owners of the company, lived in identically styled houses on the Promenade overlooking the bay. John lived at the corner of Moody Street. Lindsey at the corner of Congress.

Philip Libby owned the Universal Laundry on Cumberland Avenue. Before converting his pickup and delivery service to trucks, Libby kept his horses in the barn next to his house at Morning Street and the Promenade.

Charles Holden lived on the Hill for 90 years before moving to the Park-Danforth Home. He is the grandson of Charles Montgomery who built the big house at 23 St. Lawrence Street as a family home. At that time the family had a well for domestic water as the water main had not yet been laid to that location. Mr. Holden's great grandfather, Dr. William Montgomery, had his office at Congress and Montgomery Street, a street that bears his name. Mr. Holden was a banker for the Casco Mercantile Trust Company. He delights in telling about his boyhood on the Hill: how he was a student in the first class to graduate from the Emerson School, and learned to skate on the creek, and swim at the East End Beach. He remembers watching the last ship launched at the East End shipyard, and says that Pete Gaskill was the best ball player in the city. To Mr. Holden, the Hill holds many treasured memories.

The Weislander family lived on Beckett Street, and conducted a successful home decorating business. The son, Fred, joined the firm after graduating from Wentworth Institute.

Bertram Silverman joined his father's business after graduating from Bowdoin College. The family, who lived on Melbourne Street, established one of the major textile businesses in the region.

Morris Sacknoff lived on the Eastern Promenade at Moody Street. He conducts a thriving waste paper business. His accountant, William Welch, has been a life-long resident of the Hill.

The largest cooperage in the city was owned by Hyman Finn, a resident of Quebec Street. He bought the Greely Dairy building, adjacent to his house, as a community parking garage. It became the social gathering place for men in the neighborhood during summer evenings.

Early in the nineteenth century a large number of Negro families lived on the lower slope of the Hill and around its base. As the top of the Hill developed into a residential community, several of those families established homes in the new neighborhoods. Most of the Negroes at that time were seamen or longshoremen. John Hill served in the Navy during the War of 1812, and Enoch McLellan was a stevedore. But the families of more recent years entered skilled trades and professions.

David A. Dickson and his wife, Mary, natives of Jamaica, raised a remarkable family in their Lafayette Street home. Their four sons graduated from Bowdoin College. Three of them became medical doctors: Leon, Audley and Frederick. David W. D. Dickson is president of Montclair State College in New Jersey. Their only daughter, Lois, is a member of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.

John (Pete) Gaskill was a well-known baseball player who is mentioned in the chapter on sports. He worked for more than forty years as a lineman for the Cumberland County Power Company. Pete and his wife, Margaret, spend their retirement years as Coast Guard inspectors of small boats, and have commendations for their outstanding work.

James Johnson has taught automotive skills at the South Portland branch of the Maine Vocational Institute. Charles and Caesar Verra held important government jobs before their

Manning played the piccolo and flute in the band before attending Harvard. Current members of the band, William Conley and Samuel Fineberg, play the drums, the instruments they have played since grammar school days.

Other accomplished musicians who began their orchestral experience at the Emerson School were Marion Blumenthal, Harold Dunbar, Charles Finks, Joseph Foley, Sara Silverman, Lillian Van Amburg, Alex Morris, Sidney Levine, Edward Tolan, Nathan Press, and several members of the talented Fineberg family. Harold Ingram played the chime bells in the St. Lawrence Church, and now plays trombone in the Shrine Band in Providence. Henry McLaughlin played the tuba in the United States Marine Band. Marion Ferguson, the only bagpipe player to live on the Hill, played to the enjoyment of the Scots and Irish in the Montreal Street neighborhood. Others were less enthusiastic about Celtic music.

Alice Love, a well-known piano teacher, lived on Merrill Street.

#### NEWSPAPERMEN

It is recognized that some people leave an indelible mark on a community because they had lived there. Such is the case on the Hill because Edwin A. Moore and his family lived here, first on Quebec Street, later on Walnut opposite the standpipe. Ed Moore is remembered as the much respected state editor of the Press Herald, and in his retirement as author of the popular feature column in the paper, "All In A Lifetime." His homey touch made the scenes and characters he described come alive in print.

Ed's nostalgic descriptions of early experiences appealed to a broad spectrum of readers, such as in the following paragraphs from his column about sleigh rides:

Fred Chase also had a large grocery store, two doors north of Cumberland Avenue. His son, Ted, ran a trucking business from the family home across the street from the store.

Barrett's Market at 16 North Street sent out advertising fliers with prices listed like these in 1925:

Rump beef 23¢, lean smoked shoulders 12¢  
Turner Center milk 11¢ qt, 5 lbs sugar 27¢,  
bagged coal 16¢, 2 lbs fresh ground hamburger 25¢  
boneless sirloin steak 33¢, pot roast beef--  
boneless 15¢, cube steak 25¢

Tradesmen earned about 50 cents an hour at that time.

Foley's store on Walnut Street near Sheridan catered to the families on that part of the Hill. Foley paid neighborhood boys 25 cents a week to deliver groceries in his cart. He had a frequent turnover of help.

During the Depression Joe Winestein built a small convenience store in the narrow lot beside his house on Merrill Street. Between sales Joe busied himself studying a correspondence course in advertising, a profession he entered with a large company when the economy improved.

Ben Donnell (pronounced the same as Donald) and his wife ran one of the most prosperous stores on the Hill, at the corner of North and Congress Streets. They sold a wide selection of hardware, paint, and associated products, besides candy, tobacco, papers and magazines. The Donnells were a canny couple. They would charge a nickle for a wooden packing box when other stores gave them away, and glad to get rid of them. Boys used wooden boxes for making carts. Through their frugality the Donnells saved enough money to retire to California in the late twenties, the first people I knew to achieve that status.

The Delavina family ran an ice cream parlor and candy store on Congress Street between Hilton's and Rankin's. They made their own ice cream and candy, kisses a specialty.

Lafayette Street, Mr. Edward Huelin had his tailor shop down town where he catered to wealthy customers.

Paul Blumenthal's grocery store below Freedman's tailor shop supported a very talented musical family.

With such a variety of stores and services it is understandable why our village on the Hill was self-sufficient in the decades before the war.

#### BUILDERS AND TRADESMEN

During the period of great expansion in Portland at the turn of the century and the early decades of the twentieth century some of the city's best tradesmen and contractors lived on the Hill. The most prominent building contractor in those years was Enoch Richards of 160 Eastern Promenade. He designed and built six of the large houses on the Promenade including the large, attractive house on the corner of Wilson. The daughter of the original owner, Sheriff Sam Plummer, still lives in the house. Richards also built Plummer's flat on the corner of Wilson and Morning Street and the brick flat adjacent to it, as well as several flats on Emerson Street. He built some 600 private homes and ten apartment houses throughout Portland during his career.

Most of the building contractors worked from shops in their yards. Bill Pollard had a large shop on Emerson Street where he and his crew did their own wood turning and cabinet work. Alger Flood's shop filled his entire back yard on Quebec Street. Also on Quebec Street, opposite Lafayette, Bill Ward operated his plastering business. He served as councilman from the Hill for several years. Albert Knight and David Wallace were well-known carpenters on the Hill.

W. L. Blake, founder of the heating supply company that bears his name, lived at 54 Eastern Promenade. From its beginning the firm has had the reputation for handling the best and widest selection of heating equipment and engineer-

The iceman didn't have to let his presence be known. He stopped at houses that displayed the Sebago Ice Company card in the front window, designating the size of block wanted. He cut the blocks with astonishing accuracy, leaving the chips for children to scrounge. Clamping the tongs on the block of ice, he slung it over his shoulder onto a rubber pad that protected his shirt from melting ice, and carried it to the ice box. If the block were too large he would use an ice pick to trim it to size.

Early in this century many of the Jewish immigrants went about the streets carrying a burlap bag over their shoulders calling "rags, bottles" to let people know they wanted to buy those things. As time went on and business increased, some of them used a horse and wagon on their rounds. Children could earn money selling paper, old clothes, metal and bottles to those peddlers. To their great credit, a number of Jewish families on the Hill developed major textile and scrap paper companies from those meager beginnings.

Some of the sounds we heard on the Hill were not all from peddlers, but from other necessary services. In those days not many houses had doorbells; some had mechanical ones but no electric bells. In order to let householders know a letter had been delivered the postman blew a whistle.

Coal and wood were the common source of heat until the twenties when oil began to take over. Whenever a wagon, and later a truck, delivered coal, the men placed a coalchute from the back of the vehicle through the cellar window until it was over the coal bin. Two men kept up a steady swishing sound as the coal shot down the chute from their shovels. Most families on the Hill burned Welch anthracite, others used bituminous (soft) coal, and others burned coke.

Standard Oil Company delivered long, narrow cans of kerosene to houses for oil lamps, because oil lamps and gas lights were still the most common source of light in use.

at times, as it does everywhere.

The large population of Roman Catholics were strict in their attendance at the Cathedral. There were cordial greetings as they funneled from side streets onto Congress on their walk down the hill to attend Masses.

Our Negro neighbors were faithful members of the Green Memorial African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church. This is the oldest Black Congregation in Maine, located at Monument and Sheridan Streets.

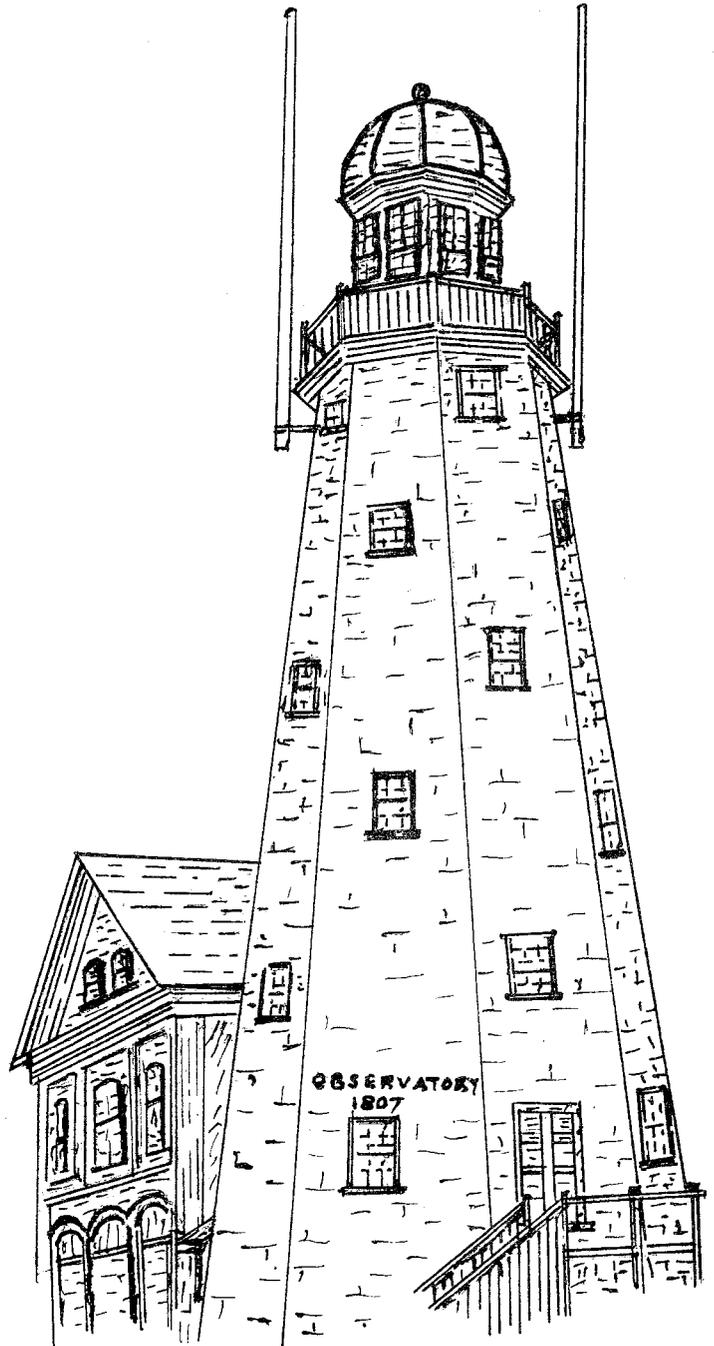
The Jews had three synagogues to attend, all within walking distance of the Hill. Rabbi Shapiro lived in the brick flat on the corner of Atlantic and Wilson Streets. Mr. Emanuel, a resident of Melbourne Street, taught Hebrew to the Jewish children.

Two churches on the Hill proper served as meeting houses for the Congregationalists and Methodists. The Methodist Church, organized in 1851, moved to the new building on the corner of Congress and St. Lawrence Streets in 1868. The city presented a bell to the church with the provision that it be used for fire alarms. After the war a change in the Hill's population caused such a sharp decline in membership that the building was sold to the city, and later razed to become the site of the Cummings Center. The membership united with the Chestnut Street Methodist Church from whom they had separated in 1851 to better accommodate the large membership in the East End.

The St. Lawrence Congregational Church is the one outstanding example of architecture on the Hill. Its granite-block structure, its turrets and steeple, and figured stained glass windows appear like a ray of light right in the middle of the Hill. The original church, organized as the St. Lawrence Street Congregational Church in 1858, was built on St. Lawrence Street. The congregation dedicated the new church building September 23, 1897 when it moved to its

MUNJOY HILL

**PORTLAND'S  
SCENIC  
PENINSULA**



**DONALD  
LINTON  
FERGUSON**