An Ethnographic Study of Lowell, MA: 
Immigration, Globalization and Enterprise in the 
'All American City'

Ethnicity Stories of Fourteen Buildings

December 17, 2009

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Preface

In 2007, the Lowell National Historical Park funded a study entitled “An Ethnographic Study of Lowell, MA: Immigration, Globalization and Enterprise in the ‘All American City.’”

Utilizing archival sources, existing oral interviews located in various libraries across the city, and key informant interviews, the project will produce a monograph that compares late nineteen century and late twentieth century immigration in Lowell, Massachusetts. The project is funded through a grant from the Lowell National Historical Park and is scheduled to be completed by December 2009.

The United States has the greatest ethnic diversity of any country in the world. Its people come from all corners of the globe, carrying essential elements of their cultures with them. In deciding what they can and must bring, immigrants consciously choose to begin the complex process of preserving various aspects of their cultural identities as they adjust to a new place, new ways of making a living, a new culture, a new civil society. Lowell is one of the most ethnically diverse small cities in the United States. From its founding as a new industrial city and continuing into the present, it has distinguished itself as a place of economic, educational, political and social innovation.

Components of the study include: 1) Extensive analysis of existing translated and transcribed oral histories at the Center for Lowell History, the Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell Historical Society, and other local depositories, 2) Completion of approximately 40 new interviews with a select number of recent immigrants to fill gaps in the archival record, 3) A series of studies of buildings on several streets selected by the LNHP that have been home to successive waves of immigrants to show change over time from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century, 4) A series of events in the neighborhoods designed to identify key informants and learn more about daily life.

The principal researcher is Robert Forrant, Professor in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. His graduate assistants were Yingchan Zhang and Craig Thomas.

This report completes item 3. It is a study of fourteen buildings, identifying the ethnicities of the people who lived in them over the course of a century.

The stories of the buildings are available on a website called “Ethnicity and Enterprise”. E&E is an ongoing study into immigrants who started their own businesses. It looks at an immigrant’s ancestry, family, descendents, and employment histories as a step in understanding the entrepreneurial spirit of these individuals. The project was started by Gray Fitzsimons in 1998 when he was Historian for the LNHP. It is now carried forward by Dan Frantz, a park volunteer who performs research and maintains a website reporting results. The website is sponsored at the UML Library by Martha Mayo, director of the Center for Lowell History at UML. See http://ecomunity.uml.edu/eth_ent/

The Ethnographic study explores many of the same aspects of ethnicity as E&E so it was decided to merge these building stories into that website. In order to maintain a certain level of consistency on the website, the original minimalist intent of each building study was extended to include a bit more of family and employment history. The E&E project leader extended such research to seven of the fourteen buildings. Of the remaining, two never had residents so there was no extra data to collect: a church (27 Loring Street) and a school (21 Branch Street). The other five were left with just their straightforward listings of residents and their ethnicities. These building were: 12-14 Carlton Street, 512 Central Street, 547 Central Street, 15 Pine Street, and 311-317 Westford Street.

Each story has footnotes for their subject matter, but the seven building with additional research have additional data available to those interested in looking more carefully at the residents. Each building has a timeline of residents of the building and there is extensive data on many individuals: significant dates (vital data), ancestry, and employment history. Most of this data is not reported in the stories directly but supports the conclusions reached in the story. This extra data is available through the website only. It consists of 66 files containing 108 pages and is not included in this report.

This map shows the location of the buildings in this study.
Blue dots are those with expanded family and employment information. Red dots contain little or no family or employment information.

An explanation on the “Ethnicities” reported at the beginning of each building’s story. An ethnicity with a digit “2” following it means that the residents were second generation – that is, their parents were the immigrants. An ethnicity with an asterisk (*) means that the ethnicity is an educated guess. Otherwise there is documentary evidence of the ethnicity.
The one-and-one-half-story wood-frame dwelling on the east side of Baldwin Street contains three bedrooms and one bathroom. It represents the historical change in single-family dwellings in a neighborhood near Middlesex Village. Constructed in 1880, it is difficult to track too much of the building’s history until 1895. The earliest records available are in Lowell atlases published 1896 and 1906, which indicate that Mrs. Sarah I. Goucher was the owner of the house at that time.²

Sarah Goucher came to Lowell from Nova Scotia, Canada, with her husband, Walter G. Goucher, who ran a produce store from the house and was a clergyman at the Calvary Baptist Church³. Sarah died in August 1909 followed by Walter in March 1910. Their Canada-born daughter, Ida M. Goucher, inherited the property and became the head of the house.⁴

In July 1919 the ownership of the house was transferred to George Hume, an 1880 émigré from Scotland. Hume was a stationary engineer for the Lowell Gas and Light Co., member of William North Lodge A. F. & A. M. and the Stationary Engineers Association, and congregant at the Eliot Union church⁵. His wife, Mary Ellen (McGovern), who also came from Scotland in 1880, was a member of the Eliot Union Church’s Kings Daughters. They had three sons, Henry, George Jr., and Scott P.; one daughter, Jeannie; a granddaughter and

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1 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
3 The church is at the corner of Liberty Street and Hastings Street. It was first organized on July 1, 1869 and was replaced by a new modern structure in Dec 1951 after it was destroyed by fire on Jan 6, 1948. See Lowell City Directory 1896 – 1909 and 1920; Center for Lowell History, Special Files, Vital Statistics Lowell 1900-1962
4 1880 United States Federal Census; the Lowell Sun, April 1 1910.
5 The church is at 273 Summer Street. Its present name is The Eliot Presbyterian Church, in honor of John Eliot, a Puritan Evangelist who preached Christianity to local Indian tribes in 1648. It is High Victorian Gothic in Style and brick is the primary building material used on the exterior. See at Center for Lowell History, Lowell Neighborhood Surveys Streets N-S and LF.C 4752 Churches – Eliot Union (Cong.)

This research was made possible by a grant from the Lowell National Historical Park.
a grandson. George Jr. was a woodworker and in 1920 boarded at 599 Dutton St., Jeannie resided in the house in 1920, and Scott P. remained in the house in 1930.6

George Hume died on June 16, 1939 and two years later his wife sold the house to Arthur R. Gardner and his wife Lilith M. Gardner, both of Billerica. Arthur was born in Canada in 1890 of an English father and Canadian-English mother. He came to the US in 1911 and worked as a manager for American Express. It may be that he bought the house only as an investment since it was only months later in 1941 that he sold the house to Glendon W. Donaghey. Donaghey, born in Canada in 1902, came to the United States in 1904. In 1924, he lived in Concord, New Hampshire, worked as a machinist for the Boston & Maine Railroad (which he continued for at least 40 years), and that year married Connecticut native Vera Ferris. They had one son, Gerald R., a mill worker who still lived with his father in the house in 1957, two daughters who died in infancy, and a daughter, Glenna M, a box maker for A. F. French & CO., who lived in the house through 1960.8

Vera died in January 1954 and the next year Glendon re-married, to a woman named Evelyn B. Upon his death in 1981, she became the owner of the house. In August 1990, Evelyn moved to Florida, ending 49 years of Donagheys living in the house. She sold it to Joseph Freeman who still resided there in 2008.9

6 Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 608, Page 73; 1920 United States Federal Census; Lowell Courier Citizen, June 17 1939; The Lowell Sun, August 2, 1951; Lowell City Directory 1920 & 1930.


9 Center for Lowell History, Special Files, Vital Statistics Lowell 1900-1962; Lowell City Directory, 1959; Middlesex North Registry of Deeds: Book 7484 P167 for Vera’s death, 1990 sale in Book 05319, 156; Lowell on-line GIS, ID 0370-220. Evelyn’s deed to Freeman reserved a “...life estate in said premises for the term of her natural life”, later released. It is possible that Freeman is a son from her first marriage.
21 Branch Street

Neighborhood: Lower Highlands

This two-story brick house is located at the intersection of Middlesex Street and Branch Street. It is the earliest public school building in Lowell and features a Greek revival design commonly used for public buildings in the middle and late 19th century. Since construction, it has had several reincarnations that reflect the changing demographics of the neighborhood. It has been a public school and home to a variety of small businesses in the busy Highlands neighborhood.1 The building’s history dates back to 1845 when what was described as “a large and elegant house” – the Franklin School—was erected on the land owned by the City of Lowell at a cost of $8954.05.2

Nason H. Morse, the school’s first principal had two female assistants and a writing master at what quickly became overcrowded Grammar School No. 4 and two primary schools.4 The grammar school merged into the new Highland Grammar School in 1883. From the sporadic annual reports of the Lowell School Committee it is reasonable to infer that four primary schools remained at the site.5

In September 1940, the Lowell School Committee agreed to rent the Franklin School to Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish for $5.00 per year, in exchange for the city’s purchase of the unfinished parish school on nearby Smith Street. Five years later, the parish bought the Franklin School building for $1,500.00 and it became the Notre Dame de Lourdes School. The parochial school had opened in the early 1900s with approximately 200 students and had an enrollment of 3,590 in 1965.6

Enrollments in the school fell in the late 1960s and after 1971 the school housed only grades one through six. Declining enrollments and increased maintenance costs forced the parish to close the school in 1975, continuing to use a small portion of the space for religious instruction for children and a Parish Center.7

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1 Lowell Neighborhoods Survey, Street A-B; according to Lowell On-line GIS (GIS ID 0750-21), however, the house has two and a half stories. According to Lowell Neighborhoods Survey, Street A-B, a bracketed Italianate door hood was added in the 1860s as part of the regular repairs and alterations initiated by the Lowell School Committee.
2 The 19th Annual Report of The School Committee of the City of Lowell, 1845,11; Old Residents’ Historical Association, No.1-1888, 103.
3 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
4 According to the 22nd Annual Report of The School Committee of the City of Lowell, 1847, presumably the two primary schools were No.17 and No.34.
5 Annual Report of The School Committee of the City of Lowell, 1888, 1894, 1920,1927, and 1936
In 1982 Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish sold the house to the Greater Lowell Mental Health Association, a private non-profit corporation organized in 1953, for $100,000. The building housed a recovery program for residents of greater Lowell recovering from mental illnesses.

Fifteen years later, 1997, the property was sold for $160,000 to a Cambodian husband and wife Huot Seng Ea and Y Nhu Ea, who lived in North Chelmsford. They sold it in 2001 to a Lowell couple (likely relatives), Seng An Ea and Sivpak Ea, for $180,000. (At the same time Huot Seng and Y Nhu also sold them the three buildings on the two adjacent lots on Middlesex Street and Branch Street.) Seng An Ea is the president of the Phnom Penh Supermarket on Chelmsford Street in Lowell, established in 1999. In 2006, Seng An Ea sold 21 Branch Street to Asian Center Management Co. for $1.00 (transferring control to a holding company located at his current home in Andover). The ownership changes reflected the demographic shifts taking place in the neighborhood, with many Southeast Asian families moving into the city and making their first homes in the Highlands.

In 2004 the building had been redesigned to house several small businesses including World Language Services, 1KK Travel Agency, and Peter’s Abatement Inc. At present the building contains a travel agency, beauty salon, and insurance, realty and mortgage services, with staff able to speak the various languages of the Southeast Asian community residing in the Highlands.

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8 North Middlesex Registry of Deeds on-line.
9 The program was later renamed the Renaissance Club, see Lowell City Directory 1985, 1986-87, 1990 and 1993. For more information about the Renaissance Club, see Merrimack Valley and Greater Lowell’s Non-profit Services Directory at http://www.mvhub.com/cgi-bin-guide/guide.pl?rm=show_agency&agency_id=101518&search_phrase=the%20Renaissance%20Club
10 North Middlesex Registry of Deeds on-line.
11 Lowell City Directory 2004
The first building on the site was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century. Land records indicate that Silas Fevin sold the property to Charles B. Mellen in the 1860s. The property remained in the Mellen’s possession when Ann Mellen, Charles’ wife, was deeded the property in 1892. Mr. Mellen was a Yankee born in New Hampshire while Mrs. Mellen was born in Ireland in 1838 to an English father and a Scottish mother. Their Massachusetts-born daughters worked as a boxmaker and a dressmaker and briefly controlled the property before it passed to John and Ellen Callahan in 1907.

The building, since replaced, was a multi-family tenement. In 1920, numerous families squeezed together there. John and Ellen Callahan lived at 12 Carlton Street, on the first floor and Mrs. Annie E. Russell, widow of Michael, lived on the second floor. Next door at 14 the building’s owner Edouard St. Cyr lived with his wife Rosana. Records indicate that the building always housed blue-collar workers and their families. St. Cyr became the building’s owner while working as a bobbin maker. Charles Craig, who worked for the railroad at the B & M Car Shops, lived on the third floor at 12 Carlton with his wife Marie.

St. Cyr’s tenants at 14 Carlton Street demonstrate the Lower Highlands neighborhood’s character. Employed in real estate, Michael Coffey lived at number 14 with his wife Augusta. Amedee Bibeault lived with his wife Blanche upstairs at 5 Rear at 14 Carlton and worked as a laborer. Machinist Oscar McFarland lived with his wife Mary at 6 Rear. Catherine Laderonte worked as a dressmaker and lived at 5 Rear. Joseph Laderonte, listed as rooming with Catherine, worked at the Gillespie-Eden Incorporated manufacturing company.

Gillespie-Eden Corporation, incorporated on May 13, 1919, manufactured electric washing machines. The company remained in Lowell a scant 3 years before on April 1, 1922 managers shocked their employees by announcing the factory’s closure and a consolidation of all operations in a larger plant in Paterson, New Jersey. A local manager said, “We regret very much to leave Lowell, it is necessary from the standpoint of economic conditions...inasmuch

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2 Photographed by Craig Thomas in 2009.
as about all of our raw material comes from [the middle west] it can readily be seen that it is only good business on the part of the company to get nearer to the home of our raw material than to be paying freight charges both ways. Our stay here has been very pleasant and, I repeat, it was with a feeling of regret that we decided to pick up stages and move.” Gillespie-Eden was an early example of large manufacturers leaving Lowell for cheaper manufacturing sites in the southern and mid-western United States, a process that intensified throughout the 1920s.5

Living at 12 Carlton in 1920, the Callahans were a prototypical Lowell Irish family. Born in Ireland in 1852 John Callahan arrived in the US in 1860 and found work as a machinist in the Lowell area. His wife, Ellen was born in Massachusetts in 1856 to Irish-born parents.6 In 1930 Ellen Callahan still lived on the first floor of 12 Carlton Street and Mrs. Margaret Russell, likely Annie Russell’s daughter, lived on the second floor.7 Margaret Russell passed away on December 17, 1929. At 14 Carlton Street, painter Thomas O’Hagan lived with his wife Evelyn on the third floor. In the rear of the tenement block auto mechanic Hubert LaFleur lived on the first floor with his with Flora. He was a communicant of Notre Dame de Lourdes Church. Francis Arsenault, a bobbin maker, lived with his wife Louise on the second floor and William Brunelle, a shoe worker, lived on the third floor.8

The essential character of the building remained working class through 1950. By then at 12 Carlton Street John Griffin lived on the first floor and A. Wilfred Carrigan lived on the second floor with his wife Josephine. Carrigan worked as a molder at the Lowell Iron Foundry. At 14 Carlton Street, taxi driver Arthur Fortin lived with his wife Helen on the first floor. Mrs. Alvina Camp lived on the second floor and Mrs. Irene Arsenault lived on the third floor and worked at Ames Worsted Company.9

The tenants in 1950 reflect the continued French-Canadian presence in the Lower Highlands neighborhood. While Lowell researcher Stephen Matchak contends that French-Canadians lived almost exclusively in Little Canada, this Ethnicity and Enterprise grant identified 21 Branch Street as a French-Canadian parochial school from the mid-1940s until around 1970 (See Ethnicity and Enterprise: 21 Branch Street).10 French-Canadian families also dominated 12 and 14 Carlton Street. The Arsenault and Fortin families’ surnames are traditionally French-Canadian. Mrs. Alvina Camp was born in Massachusetts to French-Canadian immigrants and Wilfred Carrigan’s parents were French-Canadian immigrants. His wife Josephine, born in Canada and immigrated in 1913, spoke French as her native language.11

In the rear of 14 Carlton Street, John and Josephine Regan lived on the first floor. John worked at Merrimack Manufacturing Company. Mrs. Helen Brydon lived on the second floor and Harold and Louise Southworth lived on the third floor. Harold was a helper at the R. Z. Cox Coal Company. The occupations demonstrate the general working class nature of the area about 12 and 14 Carlton Street. There were no owner-occupied houses on Carlton Street in 1950 and neighbors’ occupations included a machinist, a twister, and a stitcher at Lark Dress Company. On Marshall Street, the road where Carlton Street ends in a T-junction, about one quarter of the residences were owner-occupied. Three laborers, one at Lowell Rendering Company, a tinsmith who owned his home, a worker in the cloth

6 US Census 1900; The Lowell Directory 1905.
7 The 1920 US Census recorded a Margaret Cameron [Russell] who lived in Lowell with her mother Anna Russell.
11 US Census 1930.
room at the Ames Worstead Company, and an operator at the Walter L. Parker Bobbin and Spool Company lived on Marshall Street at that time.\footnote{12}

By 1970, the building had fallen into near-total abandonment. Of the two apartments at 12 Carlton Street, only the first floor was occupied by Mrs. Theresa Wallace. All six apartments at 14 Carlton Street, three in the front and three in the rear, were vacant. The entire Lower Highlands neighborhood suffered greatly at that time. On adjoining Marshall Street, 3 of 20 residential units were vacant. Occupations on Marshall Street included two retired heads of household, a decorator at Louis Saab, an employee at Fort Devins, and two laborers, one at Sanette Manufacturing. On bordering Middlesex Street, the situation was worse. About 18 out of 39 residential units were vacant and at least 4 storefronts stood empty in the section of Middlesex Street about the Carlton Street intersection.\footnote{13}

In 1987, the building was knocked down and new industrial or commercial space was created. In the early 1990s both addresses on Carlton Street became car repair shops for the first time. While the business owners have changed over the last two decades, the buildings have remained car repair shops since then. During the time of this study from 2007-2009 personal observations, visits, and the lettering in the photograph above indicate that 12 and 14 Carlton Street car repair businesses are owned by Southeast Asian entrepreneurs.\footnote{14}

\footnote{12} The Lowell Directory, 1950.
\footnote{13} The Lowell Directory, 1960, 1970.
Architect Frank C. Miller directed the construction of 490 Central Street in 1886 and 1887. The Victorian Gothic style building, initially used as a firehouse, utilized lots of brick due to the city’s increasing concerns over fires. The building received a substantial renovation in 1910 and held Hose Companies 6, 7 and 13 before its decommission in the 1930s.²

The story of the Lowell Fire Department, created by an 1830 legislative act, and the building are intertwined. The 490 Central Street hose company appeared in the Lowell city directory in 1898. In 1920 the building housed Lowell Fire Department Hose Company #7. The company then consisted of: Captain James A. Shea; Lieutenant Thomas H. Welch; Clerk and Driver Timothy J. Dewire; and Hosemen William J. Lane, James H. Tracy and Patrick J. Mooney. The six were married and lived in Lowell, five in the Back Central and Belvidere neighborhoods, within easy walking distance of the Back Central station. Captain Shea lived the furthest by a bit, .8 mile away, in the area of the Lowell Bleachery. Mooney moved to 207 Mammoth Road in the middle of 1920, over two miles away, suggestive of a family car or access to reliable public transportation.³

In 1920, Company #7 was entirely of Irish ancestry. Shea, Lane, and Tracy were born in the U.S., with one parent born in Ireland. Mooney and Welch were also born in America, with both parents born in Ireland, while Dewire and his wife were themselves born in Ireland. All except Tracy had children. Mooney lived with his wife and three children, two of his wife’s sisters, and two of his wife’s nieces!⁴

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1 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
Neighborhood demographics for Central Street, demonstrate a complex urban ethnic landscape in 1920. Despite the all-Irish Hose Company in their midst, the neighborhood contained numerous Armenian families (Paroigian, Chotchian, Minassian, Stephanian), along with Italian, Yankee, Scottish, French-Canadian, and Greek families.

Businesses also reflected the mixed nature of the neighborhood. They included a confectioner, two grocery stores, one variety store, a billiard hall and a real estate office, suggesting a lower-middle class neighborhood. Pietro Millinarzio operated a furniture store at 394 Central Street. Vincente Silva, a fish and oyster dealer, had a business at 452 Central Street and Manuel Ferreira, born in Portugal, operated a shoe repair shop at that same address. Nearby, Antoine Antebelian, born in Armenia in 1882, owned a tailor shop at 512 Central Street. Antebelian’s wife Anna was also born in Armenia. Firefighters might have had their uniforms tailored at their shop. Also in the neighborhood were an Armenian social club and a Portuguese social club at 404 and 448 Central Street respectively.5

The membership of the company at 490 Central Street was fairly stable from 1901 to 1910, with three of five continuing but none of the 1910 company worked there in 1920 and, by 1930, the only fireman that remained from 1920 was Thomas H Welch (at 71 years old!), though others were still with the Fire Department. More importantly, 1930 witnessed the citywide shift from a nearly all-Irish fire department. The station had seven firefighters and also served as the district office, consisting of the district chief and his chauffeur. None were born in Ireland but six of the nine had Irish heritage. The district chief, Richard E. Burns wanted himself and his family to be considered ‘American,’ reporting his parents in the census of 1930 as born in Massachusetts and his wife’s parents in New Jersey. However every previous census and his marriage record show his parents were born in Ireland, as was his wife’s father. The local captain, William F. Christie, had Irish-born parents; his wife had a Portuguese father and Irish mother. The holdover Lieutenant Welch and his wife were born in Massachusetts while both sets of parents were born in Ireland. One hoseman, John J. Kane, was born in Massachusetts of Irish-born parents. The other two hosemen, William T. Caveney and Thomas J. Burke, had British parentage but each had three grandparents from Ireland and Burke married a second generation Irish woman. Interestingly, the non-Irish at the station were all chauffeurs (drivers of the fire equipment) from Canada, two from English-speaking provinces and one from French. The chief’s chauffeur, Charles H. Cogswell was born in New Brunswick, as was John J. Rinehardt (whose wife was from Nova Scotia). Henry D. Carpentier and his wife were from French Canada. Three of nine men at the station were not Irish, a definite change.6

By the late 1930s, 490 Central Street no longer served as a firehouse. Vacant in 1938 and in 1939 it became Recreation Center #1. In 1940 Recreation Center #2 appeared at 209 Lincoln Street. Little is known of the origins, sponsors or activities of these centers. From 1944 to 1947 the building was home to the Teamsters, Chauffeurs & Helpers Union Local 49. Phillip McCarron, the local’s secretary, lived at 119 Liberty Street with his wife Madelyn and his son, Phillip A. McCarron was the son of Anthony and Cassie (Teague) McCarron, Irish immigrants. Anthony himself was a teamster in 1891 when he married, in days when the word “teamster” meant handling horses. For years Anthony ran a successful grocery store on Concord Street, employing his son, Philip, as a young man.

In 1947 the White Eagle Polish Club occupied 490 Central Street. That year, Waclaw Taraszkiewicz Jr. was the White Eagle Club’s secretary. He came to America in 1908 as a one year old with his parents, Waclaw Senior and Leonora (Terouri). They came from what is now Vilnius, Lithuania, an area that had three different identities that they reported in the censuses of 1910-1930: Russia, Lithuania, and Poland. With his name and club association, it is clear Waclaw (later called Walter) thought of himself as Polish. Both he and his father worked most of their lives in the mills. The number of Polish social clubs in the city shows the strength of the Polish population in Lowell. In 1938, for example, there were four: the Polish National Home Association (commonly called Dom Polski) at 10 Coburn Street in Centralville; just a half block away, the Polish Falcon Club at 133 Lakeview Avenue; the Polish-American Women’s Citizen Club at 20 Middle Street; and, almost next door, the Pulaski Political Club at 32 Middle Street.7

7 Hengen, Neighborhoods, Form 280, pg. 1-2; Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1910, 1905, 1932, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1944, 1947. U.S. Census 1910, 1920, 1930. The Lowell City Directory 1910 onward. Tracing the Taraszkiewicz family in the city directory is complicated by the presence of two Waclaws (not including Junior) and a Wladislaw, the vagaries of English speakers spelling Polish names, and the partial use of the anglicized first name of Walter. It’s clear the directory confused them occasionally.
In 1970 the club at 39 Central Street was the Pulaski Club. There had been a Pulaski Political Club at 32 Middle Street from 1938 until the late 1940’s and then simply a Pulaski Club at 99 Market Street (just around the block) in the sixties. It is unclear whether this was a merger with the White Eagle Club or just a move into a vacant spot.

Stanley W. Forys, the president of the Pulaski Club, lived with his wife Viola at 77 Fort Hill Avenue from 1956 to 1970. Stanley’s parents were Poland-born Szymon and Tekala Forys. They married in Lowell in 1906 but were in Canada when Stanley was born in July 1909. They returned with him across the border just five months later. Tekala, a widow in 1970, lived in the apartment upstairs from her son, who worked as a truck driver at Fort Devens in nearby Ayer, Massachusetts.⁸

The other listed representative of the Club was its treasurer Fred Bobola, who lived in Dracut, Massachusetts in 1970 but in Lowell when younger. Fred was born in 1927 to parents Stanley and Victoria Bobola, both born in Poland. Stanley’s own father, Pawel, came to America in 1909 and sent for his sixteen year-old son in 1912. The club seemed to be in the family. In 1964 Stanley was its maintenance man at its Market Street address, likely a less stressful job than working in the mills the previous fifty years. Fred’s daytime job was a guard for the Massachusetts Correctional facility in Concord, where he achieved his fifteen minutes of fame during an attempted prison break in 1959.⁹

In 2000 and 2004 the Lowell directories do not list the club. It is likely that it was merely a problem of verification as personal observation (and the photograph above) revealed that the Pulaski Club is indeed still in operation in 2008.

Surname analysis for Central Street in the Back Central neighborhood demonstrates the ethnic transformation taking place around the Pulaski Club. In 1950, shortly after the White Eagle Polish Club formed, the neighborhood contained a handful of Portuguese immigrants (Correia, Freitas). By 2000, Portuguese and Brazilians (Santos, Souza, Sousa, Rebeiro, Dasilva, Machado, Leandro, Inacio) lived on Central Street near the Pulaski Club.¹⁰

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Built in 1910, this four-story red-brick building stands on the east side of Central Street and is now numbered 512 Central Street. Similar to many other buildings in the Back Central neighborhood, it went through several address changes in the latter part of the nineteenth century because of street renumbering—the address was changed from 242 Central Street to 266 and then again shortly after to 512, the current address.¹

This site represents a perfect example of the demographic and economic changes that have taken place in the Back Central neighborhood over time. Although it is hard to determine with great certainty if J. Kidder was the original owner of the property, public records do indicate that he was involved in the title change in 1851. Robert Ellingwood, born in Massachusetts around 1811, then became the owner. He was a tin worker at David Dana’s, a coppersmith and also a tin-plate worker, on Jackson Street, near the Hamilton Print Works. In the early 1850s Ellingwood lived with his wife Martha who came from Maine and his Massachusetts–born daughter Francis T.³

In October 1855, the property was sold to William R. Cady, born in Massachusetts, earlier ancestry unknown. Cady owned a great deal of property in Lowell, some of which was on Central Street. He owned a soda apparatus business on Bowker Street in Boston in 1874 and was involved in the business of patent medicines, running an elixir-making company in Boston by the early 1880s. Cady lived on Central Street with his wife Angeline, daughter Clara, and sons William, George and Harry who together ran a grocery store in the commercial space on the ground floor at 259 Central Street (now 503 Central)⁴, another family property.⁵

In 1873, ownership was transferred to John J. Donovan, later a prominent figure in Lowell business and politics. Born in Yonkers, New York of Irish descent, Donovan came to Lowell at the age of three. Educated in the city’s public schools, upon graduation he took a job working for David Gove in his 223 Central Street grocery. Donovan took full control of the business when Gove retired in 1870. Around 1869, he also briefly ran Donovan & Co., a firm

¹ Lowell On-line GIS, GIS ID 1125-512; Atlas of the City of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1879; Lowell, Massachusetts, 1882 & 1892 Survey
² Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
³ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 75, Page 230; City Directory 1851; 1850 United States Federal Census
⁴ It was a common practice along Central Street in the mid-nineteenth century to build groceries and shops in the ground floor of a dwelling.
⁵ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 1 Page 481; 1850 United States Federal Census; Lowell City Directory 1866, 1874 and 1880; Gray Fitzsimons, 503 Central Street, Business Stories, Lowell National Historical Park
on Central Street largely in the business of powder, dualin and explosives. He manufactured paper in Dracut in 1877 and later set up the Atlantic Telegraph Company in 1884 and constructed all of the company’s lines East of Boston. In 1894 he was one of the organizers of the Fifield Tool Company, the largest engine lathe manufactory in the country.

Successful in the business world, Donovan also rose in politics as well, becoming Lowell’s first Irish Catholic mayor in 1883. According to one source, during his two years of service he gave the city “a conservative and economical administration.” In 1886 he ran for Congress and was the President of the Democratic State Convention.

In January 1902, the Moran family became the owners of 512 Central Street and later entrusted the property to Mary J. Johnson, Janet Battenlenny from nearby Lawrence, and Nellie S. Conley who came from Ireland in 1901. In May 1921, the three trustees transferred ownership of the property to John J. Preston, Frederic S. Harvey and Richard B. Walsh, trustees under the will of Eli W. Hoyt. Preston came from England in 1878 and was a mill helper in 1922; his wife Sarah A. with a mixed background of Scotland and Ireland came to the United States in 1894. Harvey, lawyer and assistant US attorney, established Harvey, Harvey & Walsh together with his father John J. Harvey and Walsh.

The 1921 City Directory indicates that the building was used as a business and a residence. Outlet Furniture Co., a second hand furniture dealer was in part of the building. Outlet’s owner Joseph H. Kelley was an Irish immigrant who lived on nearby East Merrimack Street with his wife Annie. There was also a tailor shop on the first floor owned by Turkish immigrant Antoine G Anteblian, who lived with his wife Aznife on Westford Street. Mrs. Fabiola Shea, widow of John T., also lived in the building in 1921.

In 1938 the building was sold to Massachusetts-born Arnold C. Picanso. He possibly had Portuguese ancestry. Although it is not certain if he was the “A.C. Picanso” who “cut hair in his barbershop”, he did own a liquor store on Summer Street and lived on South Street. It is also reasonable to suggest that he was an early Portuguese connection along the Central Street business district.

Tenant change in the building reflected the larger demographic changes in the entire neighborhood. In 1950, Bessie R. Goldman lived on the second floor; John J. Avila, a textile mill gill box operator, also lived on the second floor with his wife Rose V.; Edward M. Gawlik, a brewery worker for HB Co. lived on the third floor with his wife Phyllis; so did Joseph A. Kuprebich, a loom fixer, with his wife Jennie P.; Peter T. Dyzszczyk who worked as a section hand at the Abbot Worsted Co. lived on the fourth floor with his wife Ida.

In 1959, the Portuguese American Civic League purchased 512 Central and has owned it ever since. The club, founded in 1940, was established to “explore, encourage, create and develop every level of educational activity: moral, cultural, artistic, and sporting in order to promote the wholesome and adequate character of its members”. Presumably its presence reflected the continued increase of the Portuguese population in the Back Central neighborhood and the city. Somehow it is difficult to present the complete history of the club and the organizational dynamics within due to the lack of available public records. From the general immigration principals, however, it can be inferred that it was formed to facilitate the socialization among members and help them preserve their Portuguese identity. Also because of the dominated self-perception of being Portuguese, most of the members tend to socialize only with those from the same region.

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6 This part of the building story confirms the research conclusion that “by the Civil War the neighborhood had become an attractive destination for upwardly mobile Irish-Catholic immigrants”. See Chapel Hill, Lowell’s Historic Neighborhoods, a brochure prepared by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen and Landscape Research for the City of Lowell, Division of Planning and Development with funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program.

7 Illustrated History of Lowell, MASS, p574

8 Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 98 Page 245; Illustrated History of Lowell, MASS; History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts; City Directory 1874 and 1881

9 Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 338 Page 253; Book 644 Page 316; 1900 & 1920 United States Federal Census; City Directory 1921 & 1922; U.S. World War Two Draft Registration 1942

10 Comunidade: The Portuguese Community in Lowell, 1905-1930, p 45, the Lowell Historical Society


12 ESTATUTOS, Portuguese American Civil League, 2006, Page 44

13 Most Portuguese in Lowell didn’t come from Mainland Portugal but the Azores, a group of Islands in the North Atlantic Ocean.
1970s the tenant changes reflect the larger demographic shift in the city. The following is the list of tenants: Mrs. Mary Dawkszewicz, widow of Frank; Mrs. Rose Sd. Andrade; Antonio De Freitas and his wife Agrela; shoe worker Breton Gremaine; Mrs. Cecillia Netto and Mrs. Teresa Veloza. While it is not possible to be sure of the ethnicity of all the tenants, some of the names do suggest the connection with the Portuguese community as well as newer immigrant groups.\textsuperscript{15}
Lowell’s nineteenth century transformation from an agricultural community to the antebellum manufacturing heart of the United States occurred along the Merrimack and Concord Rivers and beside its various canals. Mills and associated boarding houses sprang up in the late 1820s and the city grew at a rapid pace for the next fifty years. A building at what is now 547 Central Street, in the Back Central neighborhood, appeared there in 1826. Thereafter, for nearly 120 years a neighborhood bakery operated on the site.

John Mead and Matthias Parkhurst were the first to establish a bakery on the site in 1826. It stayed in the family when Isaac Scripture took over 2 years later with his wife Lydia Mead, John Mead’s sister. When Isaac Scripture died in 1852 his sons took over the bakery and forty years later Scripture’s Bakery was one of Lowell’s oldest businesses. Around 1900, Friends Brothers Company operated a bakery at 547 Central. When Friends Brothers moved to Westford in 1912 William Scally operated a bakery on the site along with other bakeries at 5 Davis Square and 743 Moody Street. Edward Scally took over the business from William in 1920.

A horse stable operated behind 547 Central Street well into the twentieth century. In 1930 the Ry Ex Co Stable succeeded the Charles S. Little stable, a ‘livery, sale and boarding stable.’ At 549 Central Street general contractor Victor Perreault operated his business while he lived with his wife Anna at 17 Third Avenue. The Perreaults were born in Quebec and came as children to the United States.

In 1930 an auspicious event took place in Lowell that soon shaped the trajectory of 547 Central Street: the Italian American Citizens Club was founded. Founding member Carmelo Ianuzzo defined the club’s mission in a first anniversary speech: “We reaffirm our intentions to assist our brothers of Italian extraction in their endeavors to secure for themselves the rights and privileges peculiar to a citizen of these glorious United States.” The club focused on achieving American citizenship for Lowell’s Italians.

Scally’s Bakery closed at 547 Central Street in 1940. Edward Scally passed away in February, 1978. His obituary in the Lowell Sun on February 28, 1978 told the story of a man born in Lancashire, England who lived in Lowell for 75 years. A graduate of Lowell High School, he attended Lowell Textile Institute and Northeastern Law. The bakery property remained unused in 1941 and most of 1942 when the Italian American Citizens Club moved into 547 and

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2 Photographed by Craig Thomas in 2009.
5 Mario Aste, They Came in Hope: Pictorial and Oral History of Lowell’s Italian Americans, 14, 10.
549 Central Street. Victor Bernardini, a textile machine operator at Imperial Upholstery Co. who lived with his wife Lillian at 38 Liberty St., was the Club’s recording secretary.  

Lowell’s Italian-American community grew slowly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries unlike the waves of Irish and French-Canadian immigrants that preceded them. An Italian neighborhood grew in the Back Central area as individuals and families from Sicily, Tuscany, and Campania made their way through Ellis Island and eventually to the Mill City, possibly after a stopover in New York’s Little Italy or Boston’s North End.

A series of local officers ran the IACC over the years. Paul J. Perocchi, the recording secretary in 1950, maintained law office in Lawrence and lived at 194 Nesmith Street in Lowell’s Belvedere neighborhood with his wife Eleanor, a stenographer in the Soldiers Benefit Department in City Hall. Richard Beati, a salesman at Towers Motor Parts, was IACC President in 1970. Beati’s neighborhood was residential, with a mix of homeowners and renters. Neighborhood occupations included a gas company employee, a Royal Theater manager, an industrial inspector and a high school teacher. Pictures of club members in action are available at http://ecommunity.uml.edu/Italian/work_biz/index.htm.

Vito DePrenda, the Club’s treasurer in 1960, links the IACC’s story to another major Italian institution in Lowell, Prince Macaroni. DePrenda lived with his wife Doris at 149 Pleasant Street and operated machinery at Prince Macaroni in Lowell. Prince, founded in Boston, became the nation’s second-largest pasta company. In 1940 the company opened a plant in Lowell at a time when Italians were moving from Lowell to Boston and cities and towns around Lowell and the city’s mills had already started to head South for cheaper labor. In 1972 Prince acquired the Viva Macaroni Company based in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Lawrence, a little over ten miles down the Merrimack River from Lowell, contributed to the mix of Italian culture in the Merrimack Valley and was home to a larger Italian immigrant population than Lowell. Prince was purchased by the conglomerate Borden, Inc. in the 1980s and Italian immigrants and Italian-Americans along with Southeast Asian and Portuguese newcomers worked in the Prince plant until it closed in 1997.

UMass Lowell graduate Francine Corbin wrote her Master’s thesis for the Regional Economic and Social Development Department on the history of Prince Spaghetti in Lowell. She determined that Joseph Pelligrino, the long-time owner, had maintained a Lowell-based approach to manufacturing and marketing. He operated a restaurant at the manufacturing plant to promote the pasta, donated food and trees to Lowell, and maintained a paternalistic relationship with the in-house union. Unfortunately, the international conglomerate Borden Company bought the operation in the late 1980s and after a few years they sold it to the New York City-based investment firm KKR in 1994. KKR sold off the company’s productive assets and closed the Lowell factory in 1997.

The Italian community’s growth and stability were blunted by two urban planning moves in the 1980s. First, a large part of the Italian neighborhood around Gorham Street was demolished to make way for the Bishop Markham Housing Project, named for the leader of St. Peter’s Italian Catholic Church on Gorham Street. Second, the construction of the Lowell connector split apart the immediate neighborhood around the Italian American Citizens Club. In 1995 St. Peter’s church was demolished. As one historian noted, “Only [a] few of the residents remained in the neighborhood surrounding the Italian American Citizens Club, among them Joseph Priori who kept his house on Gorham Street by refusing to accept the $3,000.00 that the Commonwealth was willing to give him.”

In the 1980s the IACC worked with the Lowell National Historic Park and the State Park on the Regatta Committee and the Lowell Folk Festival Committee. But as club members passed away, the organization stagnated and in 1988 the eighteen remaining members voted to close the Club’s doors and sell the property. When the building was

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7 Aste, They Came in Hope.
8 Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1950.
9 Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1970.
10 Aste, They Came in Hope.
11 Aste, They Came in Hope, 23-7.
13 Aste, They Came in Hope, 13.
14 Aste, They Came in Hope, 14.
finally sold in 1993, the Club’s president Mario Aste noted, “This action brought the closure of a chapter in the existence of an organized Italian American Community.”\textsuperscript{15} By the time the IACC closed its doors Back Central was a largely Portuguese community. It remains so in 2009. For a more in depth look at how the neighborhood changed see the story of “594 Central Street.” In 2004, the Europa Café opened at 547 Central Street and continued to operate in 2008.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Aste, \textit{They Came in Hope}, 14.

\textsuperscript{16} Personal Observations.
594 Central Street

Neighborhood: Back Central

Built in 1890, the building standing in 2008 on the corner of Central St. and Ames St. in Back Central is currently numbered 594, 596, 598 and 600 Central Street and 5 and 7 Ames Street. Passing through numerous business occupancies, and hundreds of tenants, the block fully reflects the demographic changes that took place over the last one hundred years in the Back Central neighborhood.

The complexity of the addresses requires a short explanation. According to an 1892 Lowell map the Central Street addresses 594-600 were all the same building and either 1, 3 or 5 Ames Street were considered the same address as well. On 1906 maps, 594 and 600 Central appear as different buildings. This most likely reflects construction projects that located and relocated entryways into the block and divisions of the ground floor space into different storefronts.

What went on in the space offers a fascinating story of neighborhood change over time. It is difficult to say with 100 percent certainty who built the original structure but it is a fairly safe bet that James McCarthy was involved. According to a 1981 neighborhood analysis, “[McCarthy] erected several apartment buildings between Ames and Mill Streets.” Furthermore, an early 20th century atlas listed Irishman James J. McCarthy as the building’s owner. In 1924, the ownership had transferred to another Irishman, J. J. Sheehan. Neither lived in Lowell at the time. The site was remodeled between 1952 and 1958 into a 3-story wood frame, brick-lined building with street-level stores at 594 and 600 Central Street.

In the 1890s larger buildings—more stories and with lots of small apartments—were being constructed in Lowell than were previously built, and on smaller parcels of land. The crowding of what were identifiable as immigrant and working class neighborhoods resulted. The neighborhood contained several 3-story tenements, two-story

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2 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
apartments with stores at street level, and a few one-story buildings, which were usually stores or shops with small apartments located in the back.5

The building on the corner of Central and Ames streets continued as a mixed-use structure in the 1920s. The Rose E. Masterson variety store occupied the space at 594 Central Street from 1909 to 1921. Masterson emigrated at the age of fifteen from Ireland with her twenty-two year old sister, Katie, in 1894. The sisters were inseparable and immediately went to work in the mills, rooming together. Even after Katie married in 1899, Rose lived with her and her husband, John McLaughlin (an Irish immigrant who worked as a machinist). They all moved to 1433 Gorham St. in 1917. Rose opened a grocery store on Gorham in 1921, only five blocks from home instead of a mile and a half to 594 Central, ran both stores for one year, and then sold the 594 Central Street store. The grocery store soon turned into a confectionary store and by 1932 Rose was again running a variety store. Rose retired after 1935 and continued to live with her widowed sister as she had done her entire life.

Upon her death on January 5, 1944, Masterson’s obituary in the *Lowell Sun* described her as “a widely known resident of this city.” It listed her residence with her sisters Kathleen McLaughlin and Delia Masterson at the Gorham Street address mentioned above. The most interesting aspect of the notice is that she received her own, page-top headline. For a woman, even in the 1940s, that was an accomplishment.6

Quite a few other Irish immigrants also lived there in 1920. Widow Anne Mulligan (nee Manning) occupied a second floor apartment with four children and sister. Patrick McGagh, a machinist for Saco-Lowell Shops, one of the largest machine shops in town, lived on the third floor with wife Celia and three children. The Census lists another Irish-born couple there named John and Katherine Hines but the City Directory that year reports a Charles Hines and wife Margaret living there; Charles is reported working at the United States Cartridge Company, one of Lowell’s major employers at the time. In previous years, Ireland-born fireman Thomas Foy and his wife Margaret also lived there.7

Three Portuguese families made their homes at 598 Central Street in 1920. Manuel Lawrence lived on the second floor with his wife Rosa, a textile operator, and probably at least one child. Both Lawrences (possibly Lorenzo, originally) were born in Portugal. They are first seen in Lowell in 1914 at the birth of a son, John and they had lived at 598 Central since 1917. Confusingly, another Manuel Lawrence, this one with wife Maria (nee Alves), also lived there from 1918-1920. These two had been born in the Azores and had been in Lowell since at least 1907. John Fernandes was a laborer born in Portugal, as was his young son Joseph; they were joined in 1921 by John’s wife Augusta. In 1917, another Portuguese family had lived there, Manuel and Julia Gonsalves.8

The change in residents or neighborhood turnover appears to be high. At at 598 Central Street, three families from 1917 were gone by 1919 and only the Mulligans and Lawrences lived there in both 1919 and 1920.9

The neighborhood continued changing in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1922 Rose Masterson sold her variety store to Michael Narzakian who ran it that way for a while but converted to a fruit and vegetable store by 1930. Narzakian,

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5 Lowell, Massachusetts, 1892 survey.
7 The Lowell Directory, 1917-1920. US Census 1920. The John Hines couple appears in the Lowell City Directory at nearby locations for at least two years before and after but no Charles Hines does. The odds are that the CD just plain got the names wrong.
born in Armenia, came to the U.S. just before the First World War and lived at 598 Central Street in 1930 with his Armenia-born wife Lucy and U.S. born children Rose and Harry. When Michael retired, Harry took over the business at 598 Central and by 1970 had converted it back to a variety store once again. Also living there in 1930 (until 1945) were Armenian-born Marderos Krikorian, his wife Thelma, and their children Kaisior and Michael. Marderos first appears working as a barber in Worcester in 1917 and continued barbering in Lowell until at least 1964, with some time out to run a variety store.

Also in 1930 a Portuguese family, Manuel Freitas, wife Maria, and three sons lived in the building. The parents had married in 1899 in Portugal, had their children there, and immigrated in 1920. Manuel was a laborer in a cotton mill but son Manuel Jr. ran his own barber shop with one brother apprenticing there. Manuel Jr. continued in the trade until at least 1945. Another family at the 598 Central Street in 1930 was the Voreks. John J. Vorek was born in 1892 in Poland, immigrated in 1901, and worked in a bakery. He married Mary A. Ryan, U.S.-born daughter of an Irishman; their twin seven-year old daughters lived with them.10

The store on the corner, 600 Central Street, had Yean Wong’s Laundry from 1916 to 1917 and then remained vacant until John T. Connor opened a grocery store in 1922. Connor (second-generation Irish) in 1920 had described himself in the 1920 Census in Brookline, Massachusetts as an “Investor in Stocks and Bonds,” meaning he was already rich. His money came from a large chain of stores around Boston; he’d had a small presence in Lowell from 1909. Opening the store at 600 Central in 1922 gave him ten stores in Lowell and by 1925 they grew to thirteen. That year, he merged with two other huge chains in New England to form the First National grocery store chain, starting at 1644 locations. The chain spread nationally and was enormously successful for a long time and continued until the name was phased out around 2000 after being bought out by a Dutch corporation. For a brief period around 1960, the location was occupied by the Seventh-Day Adventist Thrift Shop.11

The neighborhood went through another transition starting in the 1950s and by 1970 the businesses and residents on the block offered another glimpse into Lowell’s immigrant story. At 598 Central Street in 1970, Januario Silva worked at Gilet Wool Scouring in North Chelmsford with his wife Alcinda. Anotonio C. Silva also lived in the building with his wife Odette and worked at Malden Mills in Lawrence. Silva is a common Portuguese name. Oswaldo Zambom also lived there with his wife Zaida and was an employee of Luigi’s Pizza. The Pouliot family, Charles, Louise and two children, had moved to 598 Central by 1956 and was still there in 1970. Charles was the son of Walter Pouliot, a French-Canadian carpenter who immigrated with his family at the age of two years, making him practically second generation. Charles died sometime before 1970. Louise, nee Stefan, was born of Polish immigrants. Daughter June worked as a packer in the Commodore Foods plant and son Stanley worked for Merrimack Travel. During this period Narzakian’s fruit store at 594 Central Street changed to Mike’s Variety and finally to Harry’s Variety Store, operated by Harry Narzakian, who now lived at 190 Perry St.12

In 2000, Suvan Thach and Phuong Thach lived in 598 Central Street. Suvan, defined as a worker in one survey, lived in the house for at least nine years. While the Thach’s ethnicity cannot be determined with complete confidence, Thach is a common Cambodian name and representative of Southeast Asian immigration to Lowell.13

The influence of Lowell’s multiple smaller migrations during the 1980s and 1990s failed to change the large-scale demographics in Back Central. Since increased Portuguese migration began in the 1950s, the neighborhood remains significantly Portuguese. Recent Brazilian immigration is creating lasting change, although the Portuguese-speaking culture remains. For example, Ames Street and Central Street in 1990 housed the Pacheco, Espinola, Diaz, Neves, DeSousa, Desilva, Labao, Oliveira and Mendonca families near 598 Central Street. At that time, only one Polish surname, Trzcienski, and one Southeast Asian surname, Phanthanousing, appeared on street lists. By 2000, the

10 The Lowell Directory, 1922-1970; The Worcester Directory 1918; US Census 1930,
neighborhood experienced little change. On Ames Street and Central Street lived the Pacheco, Esinola, Silva, Ayala, Dias, Somoes, Santos, and Silva families. Just two Southeast Asian households appeared to live in the neighborhood in 2000.\textsuperscript{14}

As could be expected, the business space at 594 Central changed over time. In 2005, owner Jorge Gomes replaced an existing furniture store with a short-lived hair salon, before new owner, Antonio Fontes, opened up a convenience store. In 2008, a hair and nail salon at 594 Central relocated closer to Lowell’s central business district, leaving the space vacant.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Lowell, Massachusetts Polk City Directory, 1990, 2000.
\textsuperscript{15} Middlesex North Register of Deeds, Book 18286, page 125; Book 19134, page 152; Book 13423, page 224; Personal Observation, February 2008.
7 & 9 Gates Street's early history is difficult to tell with great certainty. In the city’s 1879 Atlas the parcel was occupied with a building.\(^1\) City records indicate that the structure still there in 2008 was built in 1920.\(^2\) But, whatever the buildings' exact origins, its story demonstrates the changes that took place in the Lower Highlands neighborhood over time.

From 1899 to 1901, three families lived at 7 Gates Street. The first was an elderly couple, Edward Felch, age 63 in 1900, and his wife Harriet (Holden), age 58. Edward and his parents were born in Vermont while Harriet and her parents were born in New Hampshire. In 1900, Edward worked manufacturing radios according to the 1900 census report, but the city directory lists him as working “horseradish” for several years around that time.\(^4\)

The two other families were single parent Yankees. One boarded with the Felches: painter Henry Bickford, born in New Hampshire, as were his parents, and his young son Frederick N. Bickford. The second lived in a separate apartment, Della C. Ward (nee Carrie Della Phillips in 1860), a dressmaker, born in Vermont of New Hampshire parents, with her sons, cotton spinner Eugene W. Ward in 1900 and Alvin, a mill worker in 1901.

From 1898 to 1902, George H. and Elizabeth A. (Atwood) Dole lived at 9 Gates Street. George, a shoemaker when he married Elizabeth in 1873 but employed as a day laborer in later years, was born in Massachusetts as were his parents. Elizabeth Dole’s father and mother were born in New Hampshire and Vermont, while she was born in Massachusetts.

The census of 1910 shows 7 Gates Street occupied by George H and Catherine J (McDonald) Leriche, five of their children, and a widowed cousin, Catherine McDonald. George was born in 1863 to French-Canadian parents in St Albans, Vermont, about ten miles from the Quebec border. Margaret was born in Lowell to a Scottish-born father and Irish-born mother. Cousin Catherine was born in Ireland. George lived in Lowell from at least 1880 until he died in 1933. In 1910 he was a bottler for a liquor store, having worked as a driver for the store and a laborer elsewhere. The Lariches probably occupied this address only for part of the year, the City Directory showing them in addresses on Cushing Street in 1909 through 1911.\(^5\)

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3. Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
4. US Census 1900, Lowell City Directory 1880-1910. The two have an interesting history having nothing to do with the immigrant stories being told here. Harriet married Edward’s brother Milo Felch and had a child in 1861 before Milo enlisted for the Civil War in 1862. Edward had already enlisted and served 1861 to 1863. Milo died of typhoid fever in a camp in Kentucky in 1864. Edward married his brother’s widow on April 10, 1865 and re-enlisted (in the Rhode Island Cavalry) the very next day. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse the day before the wedding, April 9, but there were still skirmishes ongoing. Edward was discharged in July and a son was born to the couple about nine months later. American Civil War Soldiers Record from Ancestry.com, Lowell Vital Records online at NewEnglandAncestors.org 1865, Veterans Schedules 1890 at Ancestry.com.
In 1910, the occupants of a rooming house near here (6 Watson Avenue, about 5 blocks from 7 Gates Street) reflected the changing character of immigration in Lowell. The rooming house was operated by Assa Thompson, who was born in Turkey and came to the U.S. in 1901. Living there were four Turkey-born men who had arrived between 1904 and 1907 and in 1910 were cotton mill laborers.

For 1911 to 1917 Henry J Mailloux, a French-Canadian immigrant lived at 7 and 9 Gates Street (he switched). In the earlier days he was a repairman for the Lowell Gas Company and then worked, as did many during the Great War, in the United States Cartridge Company factory. He continued that occupation when he moved to Dracut in 1919. In 1916 and 1917 Mary Ann Bartlett lived at 7 Gates Street; she and her mother were born in New Hampshire while her father was born in New York. Never married and in her mid-80s at the time, she had spent the previous six years at the Old Ladies Home and died while living on Gates Street in 1917. Prior to that she had lived since 1874 on Methuen Street in a large house that she shared with her sister shortly after their parents died. Together they ran a “fancy goods” shop at 156 Merrimack.

In 1920 two families occupied the multi-family structure. Elizabeth Dole, whose husband George died in 1907, returned to live at 9 Gates Street. Since his death, Elizabeth had lived in at least six locations before returning to this building. In 1910, she was living with two of her daughters, Celena and Eva, and Celena’s husband, Harrington L Morgan at 1071 Middlesex.6

In 1920 through 1922, Samuel Mullen, a millwright, and his wife Bridget lived at 7 Gates Street with their children. Samuel and Bridget were born in England in 1874 and 1877, respectively. Samuel’s father and mother were both born in Ireland. In 1910 the Mullens had eight children, ranging in age from 12 to nine months. The oldest two were born in Maine. In 1930 the Mullen family, now six daughters and two sons, lived on Fernald Street. Three daughters worked as stitchers in a dressmaking shop, a fourth daughter worked in a shoe store, and the oldest son worked as a storeroom clerk. A fifth daughter worked as a nurse, and a daughter age 15 and a son aged ten were still in school.7

Over the years the building went through several numbering changes becoming 7 Gates with apartments 1 and 2, and two distinct addresses, 7 and 9 Gates Street. In 1920 it was 7 and 9, but in 1950 it was simply 7 Gates Street with two apartments and in 1960 it reverted to 7 and 9 Gates Street.

An interesting piece of the 7 and 9 Gates Street story occurs in the 1940s and 1950s. From 1944 to 1959 Isadore I. Wolf, rabbi of the Congregation Sons of Montefiore Synagogue at 132 Howard St, and his wife Esther lived on the second floor of 7 Gates Street. Isidore (originally Wolfowitz) had emigrated to the U.S. in 1914 from Korno, Russia (now Lithuania) and his wife from Minsk, Russia. They met and settled first in New York, where they had two children, before coming to Lowell in the middle 1920s to live at 166 Howard Street. In 1959 the Wolfs moved to 56 Bellevue Avenue, still in the neighborhood.

The Miller family lived on the first floor between 1949 and 1952. Gerson Miller, a machine operator at the Imperial Upholstery Company, lived there with his wife Bertha. Both were second generation Jewish-Russians. When the Miller family moved out in 1952, Mrs. Eva B. Umpleby, born on Prince Edward Island, moved in and stayed from 1953 until 1963. She worked as a manager at the American Auto Seat Cover Company. Also living with her were two other Umplebys, likely her children: Silvia B. worked as a stitcher at Casual Footwear and David W. worked as a presser for Suffolk Knitting Mills. Pressers used industrial irons to smooth cloth, a dangerous job where serious burns were common.8

Howard Street, the location of the Congregation Sons of Montefiore Synagogue, and Hale Street formed the boundaries of the Hale-Howard neighborhood. The neighborhood, a first stop for many immigrants, especially Eastern European Jews who arrived in large numbers in the 1880s and 1890s, was within walking distance of the mills and the train station. Lowell’s Jewish community maintained a Yiddish-speaking assistant at the station—someone like a social worker—who greeted new immigrants and helped them to secure housing. By 1900 the Hale-

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Howard neighborhood was dotted with several kosher markets, Hebrew schools, and four synagogues, and boasted two newspapers, the *Star of Bethlehem* and *Zion’s Banner.*

The Montefiore Synagogue became one of the neighborhood’s anchors. In 1917, the first year the Lowell city directory cross-listed people and addresses the leadership of the synagogue was: Chairman David Ziskind; Secretary and Teacher Harry Perlman; and Treasurer Israel Steinberg. Perlman and Steinberg lived with their wives in the Hale/Howard, while Ziskind with his wife Rose (émigrés from Russia) and six children lived at 75 Gates Street, just off Westford Street. One of Ziskind’s sons, Jacob, worked as a superintendent at one of his father’s businesses at 137 Cambridge Street, Ziskind & Cohen barrel makers.

The neighborhood was demolished in the 1970s as part of the city’s massive “urban renewal” plan. The Montefiore Synagogue merged with the Anshe Sfard Synagogue and moved to Westford Street, in Cupples Square. Today, the Congregation Sons of Montefiore Synagogue and Merrimack Valley Hebrew School are located at 460 Westford St.

An exploration of the surnames on Gates Street from 1950 to 1970 reveals quite diverse demographics. Surnames included probable Greeks (Rodopoulos, Voulgaris), French-Canadians (Lessard, Maille, Mercier), Armenian (Hovnanian), Yankees (Adams, Richard, Roth), and Irish (Gleason, Burns) ethnicities. A few probable Jewish names (Goldman, Burke, Sloan, Leibovitz, Sigman) indicate that Gates Street remained home to Jews who left the Hale/Howard neighborhood post-1970s.

Seven and 9 Gates Street evolved with the Lower Highlands neighborhood. In 2000, two Hispanic families lived at 7 & 9 Gates Street. Edwin Serrano lived at 7 Gates starting in 1996 and Lydia Rodriguez at 9 Gates since 1997. By 2004, the building had been transformed into four dwelling units. Edwin E Serrano remained in apartment 1 and Lydia continued to live with Raphael Rodriguez in apartment 2. New occupants reflected the influx of Southeast Asians to Cupples Square. Hai T. Le, who had purchased the building in 2000, lived at 7 Gates with Kim T. Le and Thuy Tran. Hai T. Le resided at 9 Gates. An assembly worker, Hai was middle aged and probably related to the younger Hai T. Le who lived on the other side of the house.

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11 Insurance Maps of Lowell, Massachusetts, Volume I, 1952; revisions note area demolished; see Terry Schien photo collection at the Center for Lowell History for documentation of neighborhood shortly before “urban renewal.”
This building, bounded by Loring, Grove and Manahan Street comprises eight thousand square feet. According to a description in The Lowell Neighborhood Survey the building is recognized for its various Gothic Revival features. Its history can be traced back to the 1870s, when representatives of the three Methodist Churches in Lowell\(^1\) sought to establish a new parish in the city’s Highland section. This would be the first Methodist Church in the Highlands area, although Methodists had presence in the city as early as the 1820s.

In March 1875, the Highland Methodist Episcopal Church was formally organized and in June 1876 the church at 27 Loring Street was dedicated. The building, which reportedly had cost $4,800, was called “one of the most attractive in the city.”\(^3\). It occupied “a position of much importance in one of the most beautiful and most rapidly increasing parts of the city and meet the wants of this thriving and attractive section of Lowell.”\(^4,5\)

In December 1919, after negotiating for over a year, the Highland Methodist Episcopal Church and the Worthen Street Church joined in a single congregation named the Highland Union Methodist Episcopal Church. The Worthen Street Church, originally the Wesley Chapel, had formed after a split within the St. Paul’s Methodist Church over the issue of slavery. In 1884 the Worthen Street Church had over 10,000 members and was referred to by its pastor, Reverend N.T. Whittaker as “a revival church,” “remarkable for her harmonious, benevolent and progressive spirit.”\(^6,7\)

\(^1\) According to History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts the three churches were St. Paul’s Church, the Worthen Street Methodist Church and the Central Methodist Church.

\(^2\) Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.

\(^3\) Lowell Daily Courier, March 13, 1875

\(^4\) History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Page 145

\(^5\) Illustrated History of Lowell, Massachusetts, Page 736; History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Page 144 & 145.; Lowell Daily Citizen, June 10, 1876 & June 12, 1876.

\(^6\) Yearbook and Church Directory of the Highland Union Methodist Episcopal Church, Lowell, Mass, June 1937; History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 143.

\(^7\) Accordingly, on July 1, 1920, Highland Methodist Episcopal Church deeded the property to Highland Union Methodist Episcopal Church, Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 629, 258.

This research was made possible by a grant from the Lowell National Historical Park.
From the records of Registry of Deeds it can be determined that in November 1980 the Highland Union Methodist Episcopal Church deeded this property to St. Paul's United Methodist Church. A month later, the Ebenezeth Christian Pentecostal Church purchased the building from St. Paul’s. The Ebenezeth Christian Pentecostal Church formed in 1977 by a group of Hispanic Christians. Its first pastor, Reverend Alfredo Maldonado, resigned in 1982 and was replaced by Reverend Jose U. Rivera. Rivera was affiliated with the Pentecostal Christian Church Movement.8

The Lowell church continued with this affiliation until 1990 when members voted to disaffiliate and become an independent body. Nine years later the church agreed to join the Spanish Eastern District Council of the Assemblies of God and thereafter changed its name to the Iglesia Cristian Ebenezer Asambleas de Dios. Since then the number of congregants has grown to nearly 200.9

During an April 2008 visit to the church and discussion with the current pastor Reverend Cecilio Hernandez, it was determined that Hernandez had prepared a history of the church. According to Reverend Hernandez church members in 2008 come from several Lowell neighborhoods and are mainly Hispanic population originally from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, and El Salvador. According to Hernandez although they have different cultures, “They get along pretty well in the church.”

In the future Hernandez hopes that the church can build greater collaborations with other groups in the city, especially among local non-profit organizations and the city’s large Southeastern Asian community.

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8 Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 2458, 209; According to Local History Project of Iglesia Cristian Ebenezer Asambleas de Dios by Cecilio Hernandez and Dr. David Currie, this purchase created certain conflicts related to its deed. The original deed incorrectly granted the rights to the Pentecostal Christian Church Movement Inc (see Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 02458, 210). In 1989, St. Paul’s Methodist church issued a confirmatory deed correcting the name on the deed to the Ebenezeth Pentecostal Christian Church (see Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 05058, 230). In 2000, the deed issue was resolved when the Pentecostal Christian Church Movement Inc signed a document for a new deed and clearing up all ownership issues (see Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 10694, 102).

9 Local History Project of Iglesia Cristian Ebenezer Asambleas de Dios, Cecilio Hernandez and David Currie.
The early history of 716 Middlesex Street, like many buildings that are situated in neighborhoods where a lot of changes have taken place throughout years, is difficult to determine with great certainty. The date of the original construction is not known, while Lowell on-line GIS indicates that the current structure was constructed in 1989. The ownership of the building in its early years is also hard to determine – the City Atlas of Lowell in 1896, 1906 and 1924 present no ownership while only the one in 1936 indicates that the property belonged to Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston. From other accessible public documents, however, it can be inferred that the building itself went through transformations from residence to businesses and reflects the historical changes that took place in the lower Highlands neighborhood.

The early history of the building is closely associated with the French-Canadian immigrant group in Lowell, especially Notre Dame de Lourdes Church, a French-Canadian Roman Catholic Church which was founded in 1908 to serve the religious needs of the Franco-American Catholic who had settled in the lower Highlands. In 1909 and 1910, in the building lived the church’s first pastor, Rev. Michel Dubreuil and his assistant Rev. Victor Viaud. Viaud came from France in 1903 and Dubreuil was likely from French Canada. In the 1910 Census, Dubreuil had already moved on (to Green Bay, Wisconsin) and his successor was 66-year-old Rev. Leon Lamothe, who was born in French Canada and immigrated to the United States in 1892. Also living there was Viaud and Rev. Joseph Magnan, a French-Canadian who immigrated in 1908 and who was moving that year from St. Jean Baptiste parish to “Our Lady of Lourdes” (as it was called in the City Directory for the first three years). Rounding out the household was Joseph Goyette, the Sexton, Anastasia Richard, the cook, and Anna St. Croix the housekeeper, all three entering the country from French Canada in 1910. The parish staff was imported wholesale from French Canada for the local French-Canadians. The priests in the early days were “OMI”, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a missionary order. The U.S. was still a mission country in those days for Roman Catholics.

During his tenure as pastor, Rev. Lamothe witnessed the founding and growth of the parish school, which started with about 200 students. Other associates in the first few years were Rev. Lucien Fagonière and Rev. Jean B.A. Barrette who came from Canada in 1908. Another associate Rev. Joseph F. Denis, also a French-Canadian, came to the United States in 1913, started his service as assistant pastor at Notre Dame De Lourdes in 1917, and later was chosen as the pastor in 1924. All spoke both French and English.

An examination of Lowell City Directories in 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950 and 1960 reveals that 716 Middlesex St was the home for the clergymen of the French-Canadian church in all these specific years. And this is constant with the statement from the history of the church that “the decision was made and finally approved by Cardinal O’Connell to purchase and unite two small adjoining houses located beside the church in order to provide a suitable home for the

1 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
priests”. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that 716 Middlesex was one of the two houses bought for the purpose and had been the constant home for the priests for over forty years. A brief look at the settings nearby also helps to present a larger picture of the French-Canadian community in the neighborhood during that period of time. Take 1920 for example. At 730 situated the Notre Dame de Lourdes Church. Although the church was a small inner city parish, the parish community continued to grow in population and thus the church brought several other sites for parish halls in the following decades. At 720 Middlesex was the parish school which was begun during the first years of the foundation of the church. As it kept expanding, its new construction on Smith Street was uncompleted due to the parish’s financial crisis and therefore it was sold to the City in 1936. In exchange, the school used the Franklin School on Branch Street until its closure in 1975. (See the story for 21 Branch Street.) Across the street at 717 Middlesex lived the Savard family: Jean B. Savard, a second-generation French-Canadian machinist whose father immigrated to the United States in 1868, and his wife, Georgianna Savard, a dressmaker who came to the United States in 1890. At 706 lived Sisters of Grey Nuns who staffed the parish school with some other lay teachers. To trace their history, they are an order of Roman Catholic nuns founded at 1738 in Montreal and first called to the United States in 1855 who provide accommodations to old people of both-sex incurables, orphans, and abandoned children or foundlings.

Since the 1960s, the site provided good evidence for the major neighborhood transition and larger demographic changes in Lowell. It went through a series of title changes and like many other buildings in that neighborhood, was converted into businesses to satisfy the growing need of the community. In March 19, 1963, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston sold the property to SIABOCO Corporation, a Delaware corporation with its principal office in New York City, New York. According to the City Directory, the building was vacant in that year though. In the following year, Quadro Station Inc., another Delaware corporation, became the owner and Krikorian Atlantic Service, a gas station run by William Krikorian, occupied the building. Several other auto businesses were operated there in the following few years – Palmer’s Atlantic Service from 1965 to 1972, Fox Auto Service from 1973 to 1974, and Schaefer’s Auto Service in 1975. In Dec 1979, Atlantic Richfield Co., a Pennsylvania enterprise took over the property and then sold it to Silva Bros Investment Inc. in 1980.

William F. McCarty and John E Spinney bought the property from Silva Bros Investments later in 1980 and sold it in 1984 to Doris T Finnegan, She sold the land in 1989 to Stephen Fitzgibbon, Charles H. Bryce Jr., and Bunrith Lach, as trustees of the 716 Middlesex St. Realty Trust. In the same year, the current construction was designed as a shop center for retail to serve the fast-expanding Southeast Asian immigrants within the area, who first came to Lowell in 1979 as refugees but didn’t settle in large number until after the 1985 due to second migration. Now they consist of about twenty percent of the total population of the city. Back to 1992, the 716 Middlesex St. Realty Partnership lost the property by mortgage foreclosure to Newark Investment Inc. and, a month later, Pailin Plaza, Inc. became the owner and has remained so ever since. Small-scale businesses mostly owned by Southeastern Asian families thrive there and satisfy the various aspects of the burgeoning community’s local life. In 2000, for example, seven businesses were registered in there: BAYON FASHION, a men and boys’ clothing store; PAILIN JEWELRY STORE, a jewelry store owned by Moryea Thay, who presumably has a Southeast Asian descent; RED ROSE RESTAURANT, an eating place; 5 SAM’S VIDEO, a video tape rental store; 6 PAILIN DENTAL CENTER; 10 K K INSURANCE, an insurance agency; and 10 K K TRAVELS, a travel agency.

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4 City Directory 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960


Middlesex Village in Lowell sits adjacent to the Merrimack River near the Rourke Bridge. For a good deal of the nineteenth century the area functioned quite independently from the city’s mill economy. What happened to buildings on Middlesex Street reflects Lowell’s changing demographics over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, the multiple businesses that were housed in 1717 Middlesex Street give us a glimpse of neighborhood change over time.

Long before the current incarnation of 1717 Middlesex Street, Lowell’s earliest preserved maps indicate that Massachusetts-born Mrs. Harriet N. Edwards (née Howard) owned the site in 1879. She had probably lived there since 1847 with her husband Isaiah, in the area of neighboring Chelmsford known as Middlesex Village, annexed in 1874 to Lowell. Widowed in 1859 with two young children at the time, Edwards is listed in the Lowell City Directory and the Federal Census of 1880 at 981 Middlesex Street, the house in the middle of her lot. The lot was subdivided many times in the years to come and was renumbered in 1894. The current 1717 Middlesex Street address was part of the old 981 property and probably would have been 955 if it had been subdivided before the renumbering. The Edwards name is remembered in the current Edwards Street, which runs along the west side of the original lot.9

Structures—both houses and commercial properties—were on parts of the parcel before the establishment of the specific 1717 parcel in 1962. In the 1950s a building on the site had a protected steel frame, hollow concrete/cement block construction and 11 inch thick firewalls.10

In 1963 Bruce Glassman opened the “Kelley’s” roadside restaurant at 1717 Middlesex Street. Glassman, who lived on Montview Road in Chelmsford, also managed the Rialto Drive-in theatre in Lowell. Kelley’s operated continuously at that location until 1973.11

In 1973 Fred Souliotis of Lowell’s Acre neighborhood opened “Fred’s Country Store” at 1717 Middlesex Street. Souliotis lived at 635 Broadway Street and operated the Acre Variety Shop at the same location. In 1975 he moved

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8 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
to 411 Broadway and started the Acre News and the next year closed Acre Variety Shop. In 1981, Souliotis still lived in the Acre and continued to operate Fred’s Country Store at 1717 Middlesex Street.  

There are at least two Massachusetts families with name “Souliotis” in the 1930 US Census, neither of which has a Fred. Thus when Souliotis and his wife Shirley came to Lowell is difficult to determine. The families of that name in 1930 were from Greece and it is reasonable to assume Fred is of that heritage. In 1985 Fred’s Country Store closed and 1717 Middlesex Street became a Jiffy Lube.  

1717 Middlesex Street underwent a major renovation in 1986 that added several small commercial/retail spaces to the site. In 1990 three vacant businesses and Kiran Shah’s East-West Foods inhabited the space. Shah, lived in Nashua, and also helped to operate a second Indian grocery store at 738 Merrimack Street. This reflected an increase in the Indian population in the Middlesex Village neighborhood. By early 2000, the building housed four businesses: Aladdin Deli, a grocer; East-West Foods grocery store; Sharon & Buckley Associates, specialized in durable goods sales; and University Music, which sold instruments. Brian and Marlene Buckley of South Lowell owned and operated University Music in one of the new ‘commercial condos’ added in the 1986 construction.

By 2004 Aladdin Deli had closed and there were five new stores on the site: La Pradera Bar and Grill; Middlesex Variety, which included a Subway franchise; K&K Nursing Uniforms; and the Omkar Pure Vegetarian Indian restaurant. Kiran Shah and his wife Leela operated Omkar and East-West Foods. Shah owns four units in the building that are zoned for “office, retail or other commercial purposes.”

In November 2007, seven businesses occupied the building: Sharon & Buckley; University Music; East-West Foods; Udupi Bhavan, pure vegetarian Indian food; La Pradera; Straight Ahead Skateboards; and Subway/Middlesex Variety store. The change in businesses from the 1990s to 2008 demonstrates the increasing influence of the Indian community in the neighborhood. From one grocer in 1990, four Indian businesses used space at 1717 Middlesex Street during the last 20 years.

Middlesex Village is a neighborhood in transition. When surnames on the streets adjacent to 1717 Middlesex Street were reviewed it appears that houses and apartments on Hadley, Cornell, and Baldwin Streets are occupied by a mix of Irish, French-Canadian, and Yankee families. Furthermore, the occupants are fairly consistent across the period from 1985 to 2000.

On the other hand, nearby Pratt Street’s large condominium complex demonstrates the changed demographics in Middlesex Village. In 1985, the surnames of the residents were mainly Irish (McGrade, Tracy, Mahoney, Dennison, Grady, Donnelly), French-Canadian (Fortien, Poirais, Gagnon, Comeau) and Yankee (Greenwood, Perkins, Harrington, Johnson, Evans, Jones, Lowe). By 1990, the list included the first South Asian families (Bhatt, Prithvi, Reddy, Mehta, Deshpande, Durve, Modak). A 2000 survey demonstrated an even more dramatic shift toward South Asian families (Mungekar, Nair, Narayanan, Shetty, Tamilisclvan, Prabhu, Bhanuprakash, Bhatnagar, Shah, Sharplvasu, RagHAVan, Roy, Veerabhadr). The rise of South Asian businesses and the increased number of South Asian families in the neighborhoods is also reflected in the opening of a Hindu Temple at 1705 Middlesex Street. Some business operators believed the temple was built because the land was available and the South Asian businesses were already in the neighborhood. But one

12 Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1975; Greater Lowell City Directory, 1979; Polk’s Lowell City Directory 1981.
13 Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1986-87. The Souliotis families were misspelled in the 1930 Census as Soulistes and Souliote (with heads of household Heracles and Anna), but comparison to the Lowell City Directory for residents at the same address show the correct spellings are Souliotis.
15 Polk’s Lowell, Massachusetts City Directory 1993.
18 City of Lowell on-line GIS, accessed November 2004; Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 5865, page 139.
19 Personal observation, November 2007.
person noted that the temple used its own catering service and that there were no relationships between the businesses at 1717 Middlesex Street and the temple.\footnote{Personal communication, East-West Foods employee, December 2007; personal communication, Udupi Bhavan manager, December 2007.}
### 16 Pine Street

**Neighborhood:** Lower Highlands

| Ethnicities: | English | Southeast Asian |

The current red-brick building is located on the southerly side of Pine Street. It is a major block of businesses in the commercial center at the intersection of Pine and Westford Streets. The building’s early history is difficult to determine with great certainty. Public records do provide some useful clues to trace the corner’s transformations from residence to businesses and help reveal some of the changes that took place in the Cupples Square neighborhood over time.¹

Massachusetts-native George F. Penniman was likely the lot’s first owner in the early 1890s. Penniman arrived in Lowell in the 1840s and worked in the parcel delivery business. He later partnered with H. T. Morril to head Penniman & Company’s Express in the 1870s and the 1880s. Packages were delivered via the Boston & Lowell Railroad as far as Lawrence, MA and Nashua, NH. Eventually Penniman got out of the delivery business and entered the real estate business. By the 1890s he “became widely known through his efforts in building residences in the Highlands”.³ He and his wife Mary had a son and a daughter.⁴

In June 1919, fifteen years after George F. Penniman’s death, his son George A. sold the property to Sarah E. Vincent, an English immigrant who resided there with her husband Albert. Albert Vincent, also from England, worked as a machinist and later as a gardener. Vincent was active in religious activities as sexton at the Calvary Baptist Church, was a member of the Loyal Integrity Lodge, a participant in the Men’s Fellowship class and member of the Church Boy Scout troop. The Vincents had two sons, Albert H. and William J., and two daughters, M. Emma and Edith, who were born in England before the family arrived in the U.S. in 1904.⁵

Two aspects about the Vincent family are noteworthy. First, it was unusual 90 years ago for a married woman to be listed as home owner while her husband was alive, but Sarah remained 16 Pine Street’s owner until she died in June 1945. In July 1945 her heirs Albert H., William J. and Edith A. granted the property to their father Albert and their sister M. Emma. One cannot help but wonder why M. Emma was not one of the heirs as her siblings were and how interesting this ownership arrangement was carried out. In November 1947 Albert and M. Emma sold the property to

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¹ Lowell Neighborhood Survey, Street N-S, 15-23 Pine Street
² Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
³ Lowell Daily Courier, 1/20/1904
⁴ 1896 & 1906 Atlas; Lowell City Directory 1874, 1876, 1881, 1892, & 1897; 1900 U.S. Census; Lowell Daily Courier, 1/20/1904
⁵ Middlesex North Registry of Deeds, Book 603 Page 208; Lowell City Directory 1920 & 1940; 1920 U.S. Census; The Lowell Sun, 6/25/1945 & 6/18/1949

This research was made possible by a grant from the Lowell National Historical Park.
New England Land Company, a Boston, Massachusetts corporation. One year later, First National Stores, Inc., a chain of retail grocers with eight locations already in Lowell took over operation of 16 Pine St. into the 1960s.

Since the 1970s 16 Pine Street reflects the Lower Highlands demographic changes. Like other buildings in the neighborhood it was converted into an office building and quickly filled up with a number of service providers in part targeted to the burgeoning Southeast Asian population. In 1979, medical, legal and real estate services were provided through Dr. James F. Kiely, the Lowell Orthopedic Association, dentists Vernon R. French and William R. French, and lawyers George B. Leahey, and Malcom F. Fryer, Jr. In 1990 the building housed Mortgage Financial Service, Hill Group Inc. and seven medical offices: Physical Therapy Clinic of Lowell, dentists Kenneth McPartland and Elizabeth L. Burns, physicians James F. Kiely and Howard D. Harrison, and Lowell Medical Ride Inc. which provided ambulance service.

Over time medical and legal services predominated in the building. For example, in 2004, the most recent year a Lowell City Directory is available, tenants included: a psychologist, a dentist’s office, a chiropractics and physical therapy & rehabilitation office, and the law offices of attorney George B. Leahey, and attorney Louis S Haskell, likely a relative of Sasikarn T. Haskell, trustee of 16 Pine Street Realty Trust. Sixteen Pine Street also housed a computer service and repair store, Mom’s Therapy & Herbal Center, Kreative Sound Recording Studio, the Reliable Recruitment Services employment agency, and Technical Cable Services, an electrical wiring firm. Why so many medical and legal services office in the building? It may be related to the fact that the neighborhood’s large Southeast Asians population dealt with significant health documentation and legal status questions.

6 North Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book 1026, Page 287, Book 1080, Page 460; The Lowell Sun, 6/18/1949
8 Lowell City Directory 1979 & 1990
9 North Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book 1949, Page 418, 419 & 420, Book 10558, Page 192; Lowell City Directory 2004
295-301 Westford Street

Neighborhood: Lower Highlands

Ethnicities: Jewish-Russian, French-Canadian, Greek, Armenian, Scottish, Southeast Asian

Cupples Square is an ideal location for any study of Lowell’s immigration and demographic changes. In Lowell’s Highlands neighborhood, the Square is a center of the Southeast Asian community. Changes over time at the mixed-use space at 295-301 Westford Street exemplify the neighborhood’s dynamic evolution.

Built around 1900, in 1920 cobbler Michael Feldman (Fieldman) operated a shoe repair shop at 301 Westford Street. Feldman, his wife Fannie and his eldest son Joseph were Russian-born Jews according to the 1920 US Census; Fannie was actually born in territorial Poland. Their household included five other children under sixteen, Sadie, Abraham, Dora, Minnie, and Hymen. Joseph, age 21, was listed as a shoe peddler and presumably worked in his father’s family shoe shop. Several shoe shops existed in the area, and there may have been connections between them. For example, Philip Snider operated a shoe repair business in the 1920s in Cupples Square and the Reslow family operated a shoe business at 311 Westford Street for over three decades. The long tradition of shoe stores in Cupples Square ended when Jerry’s Shu-Tap closed in 2008.

The shoe repair businesses, residents, businesses, and entrepreneurs who passed through Cupples Square exemplified the immigrant and working-class nature of the neighborhood. Early 1920s Cupples Square businesses included a violin teacher, confectioner, dressmaker, shoe repairer, grocer, barber, druggist, fishmonger, clothes cleaner, milliner, and tailor. Immigrant entrepreneurs included Joseph Perron, a French-speaking, French-Canadian barber and Louis Bucuvalas, a confectioner and coffee-shop operator. Lowell. Bucuvalas, (a common Greek surname) created a path for Greek businessman to locate businesses in the Square.

1 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.
The center of Greek life was Market Street in the Acre neighborhood, next to downtown. Bucuvalas lived there with his wife Stavrula at 614 Market Street. Greeks, like the Irish before them, used a foothold in the Acre to open businesses across the city and eventually move from Lowell to adjacent towns. While the community grew, “Coffeehouses were a substitute home for the first wave of men[,] places for card-playing and talk.”

The end of the 1920s witnessed an influx of new immigrants into the Square. Bucuvalas worked as a confectioner there and fellow Greek businessman John Georges opened another confectionary story in the neighborhood. Antoine Anteblian, a clothes cleaner, moved into 301 Westford Street with his wife Aznife. Anteblian, according to his World War II draft registration, was an Armenian born in Aintab, Turkey. Kaspar Boyajian, a fellow Turkish Armenian, moved into Anteblian’s building around that time.

In 1930 James Johnston operated a bakery at 295 Westford Street. Born in about 1886 in Scotland Johnston’s native language was Scotch. His family came to the US around the time of his birth. His wife Violet’s parents were born in Scotland and also spoke Scotch. The Scottish arrived in numbers in Lowell after the Irish and were the second significant non-Yankee’s in the area. Their arrival probably preceded the U.S. Civil War as the first Scottish church, the First Presbyterian Church, opened in 1861. The largely Scottish parish purchased the Appleton Street Congregational Church in 1874. The Westminster Presbyterian Church, founded later in 1888, was also a Scottish parish.

James and James S. Johnston ran Johnston’s Bakery, “Home of Fine Baking, Specializing in Wedding and Birthday Cakes,” from the 1940s until the 1980s. James lived on the second floor of 301 Westford Street and James S. lived with his wife Ruth on Littleton Road in Chelmsford. The essential character of the Cupples Square neighborhood remained working class during that period. Stores in the Square in the late 1970s and early 1980s included Lerer’s Superette grocery, Cupples Square Diner, a fish market, Terminal Fruit, a beauty parlor, a barber shop, a men’s fashion store, and a plumbing and heating contractor. The neighborhood character changed dramatically in the late-1980s as waves of Southeast Asian immigrants moved in to Lowell and surrounding communities.

By 1990 there were many important Southeast Asian institutions in Cupples Square. The Khemara Restaurant opened at 295 Westford Street and remained a neighborhood fixture there for almost a decade, before moving across the street to a larger location at 308 Westford Street. The restaurant was sold in 2008 to another Southeast Asian restaurateur. The Hong Kong Market occupied 289 Westford Street in the late 1980s and continues a run of almost 30 years serving the grocery needs of the Southeast Asian community. Rachana Jewelry, owned at different times by Pheang Ros, Conh Thach, and Chea Sok, opened in the early 1990s and continues today in Cupples Square as the longest running jewelry and/or fashion store in the neighborhood. Other fashion and jewelry stores in the neighborhood include Arun’s Fashions, Hong Kong Hi Fashions, Ankor Fashion, Mykim Jewelry Store, and Bayon Jewelry. In 2007 the Mongkot Pich Salon and Amara Fashion were at 295 and 301Westford Street respectively. Amara Fashion closed during the 2008-09 recession and a Southeast Asian video store now occupies the space.

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7 The Lowell Directory 1922, 1924, 1926, 1929.


The earliest maps of Lowell’s Cupples Square neighborhood show six identical buildings on Westford Street between Loring and Coral Streets. The current 311, 313, 315 and 317 Westford Street were numbered 85 and 87 in 1879. The residential area included a Methodist Church on Loring Street and an Episcopal Church on nearby Walker Street. Few businesses existed except for a foundry six blocks away at the railroad. By 1892, two simple two-story residential buildings numbered 313 and 317 Westford Street emerge.

In 1910, 311 Westford Street housed Massachusetts-born James F Morrison, his wife, Alice F (McShea), brother-in-law Alfred T. McShea, and widowed father, Hugh Morrison, who was born in Ireland. James was the proprietor of a Gorham Street extract company, making flavoring syrups and extracts. Morrison’s father-in-law, trolley driver William H. McShea, a second-generation Irishman married to a second-generation Irishwoman, Mary McQuade, moved in with them. They all lived here through 1917 when the elder McShea died.

A second family at 31 Westford in 1910 was the Ryans: second-generation Irishman John J., a bartender; his wife Mary A. (Foye), also second-generation Irish; and their three children.

From 1910 to 1913, French-Canadian shoemaker Solomon Gregoire lived with his wife, Delima, and several of their ten children, at 317 Westford Street. During this time, five of their ten children lived with them; some worked at his shop and another shoe shop, two worked in bakeries, and one was a manager at the St. James Hotel.

In 1917, Louis Buchsbaum, born in Austria, lived for one year on the second floor of 317 Westford Street with his wife Henrietta. Louis had arrived in New York City in 1902 and by 1910 he was running a window washing company in Massachusetts, setting up branches in Cambridge and Lowell in 1912. Murdoch A. MacIver, likely from Scotland, and two other Murdochs, probably his daughters, Gladys E., and Katherine L, lived on the first floor. The two women ran a millinery shop.

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1 A note about the address: there is disagreement among the sources about the current street numbers. According to the Lowell on-line GIS, the address for the first building is 307, 309, 317 Westford Street and the address for the second building is 311, 313, 315 Westford Street. The 1924 Lowell Atlas (Richards) shows the two buildings with addresses 311 and 317. Apparently the building at 311 used the mailing address of 313 for the second floor and the building at 317 used the address 315 for the first floor and 317 for the second. According to the 1952 Sanborn insurance maps, the building’s address is 311, 313, 315, 317 Westford Street. The Sanborn numbering pattern was chosen because it best matches the current, observational situation in March 2008.


3 Photographed by Craig Thomas and Yingchan Zhang.

In 1920, five families lived in the multi-unit building. Railroad machinist John H. Libby, a second generation Canadian-English, lived with his wife Elizabeth F. on the first floor at 311 Westford Street. Unusually for a married woman at the time, Elizabeth worked as a saleswoman at a department store, perhaps because the couple was childless. Grant Gamble, born in English speaking Canada, worked for Lamson Company Cash Carrier and lived with his wife Effie on the second floor. Another Lamson worker, Yankee J. Leon Olivet and wife Margaret also lived there. Another machinist and Yankee, Edwin J. Hill, lived with his wife Estelle, two children and a grandchild in 315 Westford Street while the Yankee widow Mrs. Annie Copeland lived at 317 Westford Street.

In 1920, across and up and down Westford Street on the same block were several commercial businesses including an A & P grocery store, a shoe repair shop, a laundry, a confectionary, a creamery, a barber shop, a dressmaker, a music teacher and a druggist. Several machinists also lived in the area. The occupations indicate the neighborhood’s middle-class/skilled working class character.

The 1924 Lowell Atlas shows the two buildings with addresses 311 and 317. The building at 311 had its owner identified as Ryan, probably William Ryan a Canadian-English immigrant, who lived there at least in 1922 with his daughter Ethel M; they are apparently not related to the 1910 Ryans. The building at 317 was owned by a person named Hoyen, probably Francis M. Hoyen, a Syrian immigrant who lived there at least 1920-1922 and who ran a barber shop at 71 Charles with his brother George.

In 1926 the Abbott Bros. grocery store opened at 313 Westford Street and established the mixed-use space still operating today. Proprietor Goodwin Abbott, American born, lived at 315 Westford Street with his father and mother, Samuel and Ethel, Russian-born and Yiddish-speaking, having entered the country in 1892. Small grocery stores were in perilous times then, being marginalized by chain stores. A & P had been two buildings away since 1917. Abbott had started in 1925 by taking over the A & P at 319½ when it moved only two buildings down to a larger space at 323. The Vermont Tea And Butter Company was at 318 and Cloverdale Creamery was at 349. The John T Connor Grocery Company was two buildings away; it had a dozen stores just in Lowell and in 1925 merged with two other eastern Massachusetts chains to form First National Stores, still in existence today. By 1930 the Abbotts had left Lowell and moved to Boston where Goodwin continued in the retail food business. The store at 313 passed into the hands of Yankee Charles W. Hamm, who had earlier clerked for Connor. Hamm himself gave up and left town by 1932, turning the grocery store over to Russian-born Joseph Kaplan, who also had a fruit store at 321 Westford Street, a produce store on Gorham Street, and a coal business on Moody Street. Kaplan lived on Gibson Street and ran the store until he retired in 1938.

In 1930, 315 and 317 Westford Street were residential. Joseph E. Archambeault, his wife Rosa, and their five children lived at 315 Westford Street. Rosa was French-Canadian immigrant. Joseph, who worked for a furniture company, was born in New Hampshire of French-Canadian parents. Henry E Cohen, a Russian immigrant lived at the same address for a few years. He and his brother created the Merrimack Paper Tube Company, providing a livelihood for many others of their family.

This year, Yankee Daniel P. Brown lived at 317 Westford Street with his wife Ninaetta and three children. He worked as a watchman at a local shoe shop in 1930 after working for the railroads, probably the streetcar system in Lowell, as a hostler and then a locomotive engineer. Ninaetta was born in Maine of Canadian-English parents. Daniel P.’s son by a previous marriage, Daniel E., also worked in a shoe factory in 1930 and by 1956 probably traded on an old friendship with Henry Cohen to get a job at the Merrimack Paper Tube Company. Daniel E. and his mother Ninaetta were still living at 317 in 1956.
In 1930 Henry Reslow was the proprietor of a shoe repair business at 311 Westford Street and lived at 83 Corbett Street. He had had a shop at 242 Central since the early 20s and started the one at 311 Westford when Carl was old enough to learn to be on his own. Carl took over in 1932 and Henry ran his own shop on Central Street with the help of another son, Albert. Henry Reslow’s parents were born in Sweden and he was born in Michigan. His wife Ellen was born in Sweden; their first child, Elsie, was born in Rhode Island, and the other four—Carl, Edith, Albert and Gertrude—were born in Massachusetts. Next store to the Reslows lived second-generation Swede Edwin Peters. Other residents in the neighborhood were born in Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, England, Lithuania and Portugal or had parents born in one of these countries.

The Reslows continued to operate their two shoe repair businesses for many years. Carl’s shop at 311 Westford Street continued for over three decades, going into the 60s. Henry Reslow stayed with his shop until he semi-retired by 1956, at which time he went to work for Carl, as did Albert, making three Reslows at 311 Westford Street in 1956 through 1964.9

Scandinavians were a part of the Lowell story long before the Reslow family’s arrival. Around the turn of the twentieth century an area of Lowell situated near the corner of Fay Street and Lundberg Street became known as ‘Swede Village.’ The area was about forty percent Swedish and forty percent Irish. In 1911 a strong social network existed within the Scandinavian community and its 1,500 members held a “merrymaking festival,” the exact details of which are not yet clear. The Reslows stayed in this area until the 1950s.10

When Joseph Kaplan retired in 1938, he closed his grocery store at 313 Westford Street and his fruit stores elsewhere. Second-generation Greek Arthur Caragianis, who had clerked at Kaplan’s fruit store three buildings down in 1932, converted 313 Westford Street into a fruit store, a usage that would be successful for fifty years. In 1945, it was owned by Jacob Gardner, who lived a short distance away at 238 Wilder Street with sons David Gardner, a clerk, and Irving Gardner, a lawyer. In an interesting twist, Gardner had been the employer in 1911-1915 of Joseph Kaplan, who preceded Gardner in the grocery store here from 1932 to 1935. Gardner was succeeded in 1956 by second generation Greek George Malapanis of neighboring Dracut, Massachusetts. He ran the store as the Terminal Fruit Company until the 1970s.11

In 1970 Jerry’s Shu-Tap succeeded the Carl Reslow’s shoe repair store at 311 Westford Street, continuing as a shoe repair store that still operates in the Cupples Square neighborhood, now at 319 Westford Street. Proprietor Gerard Saucier and his wife Elizabeth are French-Canadians. Dino Borras became the new operator of Terminal Fruit at 313, alongside Jerry’s’ Shu-Tap. He lived in Lowell’s Acre neighborhood. Arthur Ramalho and his wife Rita lived at 317 Westford Street. He worked for the Middlesex County Training School.12

Beginning in the late 1970s Cupples Square neighborhood witnessed a major and ongoing demographic shift. The 311-17 Westford Street block is located near the center of an area bounded by Coral, Loring, and Leroy Streets. Residents’ surnames demonstrate the dramatic demographic shifts that occurred there. In 1975 the grid held a mix of peoples and backgrounds. Based on surnames, because census data does not exist for the modern period, the block was dominated by Irish (Gallagher, Lannan, MacKinnon, McGadden, McMeniman, Lambert, Connelly, McWilliams) and French-Canadian (Jacques, Cote, Legere, Lafontaine, Cornier, Lafleur, Ducharme) families.13

Few families moved in or out of the neighborhood from 1975 to 1985, with one exception: Boeuf and Ann Le moved into 48 Coral Street. It was the first appearance of Southeast Asians in the record for the Westford-Coral-Loring-Leroy Street grid. In 1990 several families (Legere, Lannan, McWilliams, McGadden, Jacques) remained.

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10 Lowell Courier-Citizen, “Scandinavians of the City, 1500 Strong, Gather at Lake Nabnassett for Their Great Merry Making Festival,” 26 June 1911; Lowell Sun, “And Swede Village was born,” 25 April 1975.
13 Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1975.
But the neighborhood was changing as several Southeast Asian families (Pham, Pin, Vu, Ngyuen) were homeowners or tenants there.\textsuperscript{14}

The 1990 occupants of 311-17 Westford Street mirrored the changes of the surrounding streets. Sanara Chea and Phurin Am operated Arun’s Fashions at 311 Westford Street. The relationship between Sanara and Phurin is unknown, although the Chea and Am families lived together at 363 Walker Street within walking distance of Arun’s Fashions. Sanara lived with Son and Seourn Chea and operated equipment at the Analog Device facility in distant Wilmington, Massachusetts. Mrs. Phurin Am was also an operator at Analog Devices, and Visay Am lived with the couple and clerked at Arun’s. The close knit nature of the housing and working conditions may represent close family ties or simple convenience.

It is important to note that the newcomers to the neighborhood filled quite similar roles/occupations as their predecessors, opening a variety of convenience shops and service-oriented businesses and also working in many of the leading industries of the time. In 2000, 311 Westford Street housed Monora Videos & Services. By 2007 the Cambodian Bayon Jewelry store operated there. Elsewhere in the Cupples Square neighborhood there were numerous Cambodian video stores, despite the closing of Monora Video. The Som Barber Shop worked out of 313 Westford Street while 315 and 317 remained residential.\textsuperscript{15}

Though the composition of the neighborhood had changed dramatically over the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, successive waves of newcomers established the small service-type stores, neighborhood markets, and convenience stores necessary to go about their lives.

\textsuperscript{14} Polk’s Lowell City Directory, 1985; Lowell, Massachusetts City Directory, 1990.

\textsuperscript{15} Lowell, Massachusetts City Directory, 1990; Lowell, Massachusetts Polk City Directory, 2000; Personal observation, November 2007.