

2

**Urbanization Crosses Park Avenue
The Development of Newton Square**



Newton Square, looking southward from June Street

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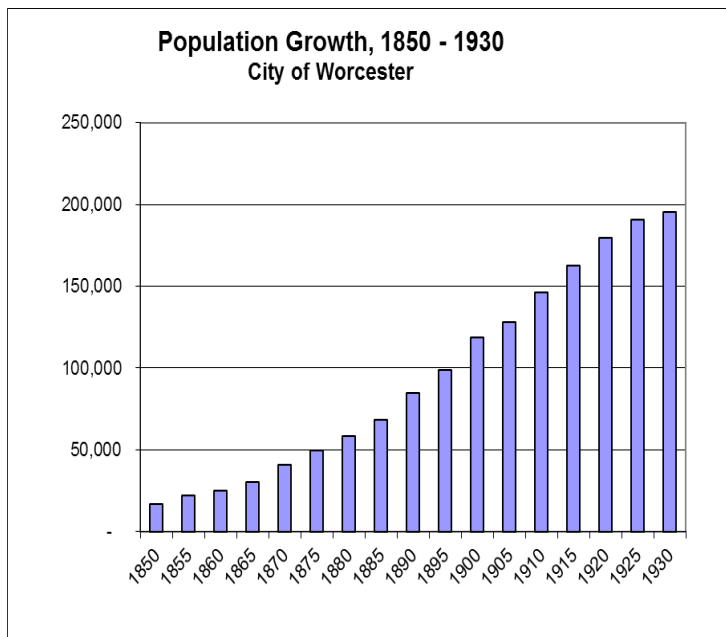
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By the 1840s, spurred by the arrival of the railroad, the transition of Worcester from a shire town of lawyers, merchants, and farmers to an industrial city was well underway. The massive change that was to redefine the character and composition of the community would take decades to effect, and the old ways of the town would fade slowly, but the great and rapid growth of industry soon brought new pressures on the land and resources to accommodate a surging populace.

From about 17,000 persons in 1850, two years after its being re-chartered by the Commonwealth as a city, Worcester grew to about 25,000 persons in 1860, and over the next seventy years, as the

2.1



city became and remained an important center of manufacturing and innovation, its population increased nearly eight times over, exceeding 195,000 by 1930. As can be seen, that growth was fairly consistent across the decades.¹

An expanding population obviously creates a need for more housing – dwellings of all kinds, sizes, and price ranges, rental as well as ownership tenures - so it was inevitable that the need for more land would eventually bring great pressure for residential development to the west side, and specifically to the Pleasant Street corridor to Newton Square and beyond. It was an open question as to what kinds of housing would be built there, and for what part of the local market. By 1900 the city’s population had reached nearly

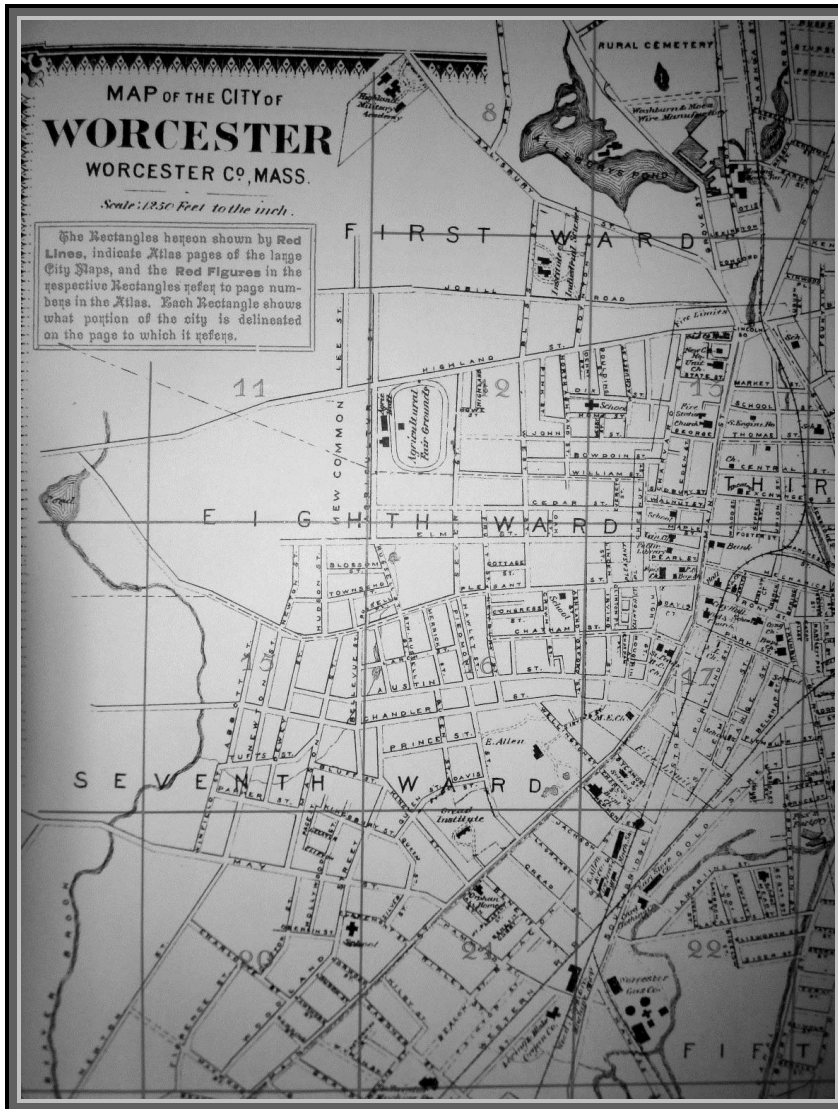
120,000, double what it had been only twenty years before. The first decade of the new century would see growth by another 26,000 persons, and some 34,000 would be added in the decade of the 1910s.

¹ Population figures were taken from the Worcester House Directory, various volumes and publishers. Data for years ending in zero were from the U.S. Census, and years ending in five from state censuses.

A “Walkabout” in 1870

From the city Atlas of 1870 it is apparent that at that time, on the city’s west side, the line between the urbanized part of Worcester and the surrounding agricultural land ran along Winfield, Abbott, and Newton Streets, south of Elm Street and the “New Common.”²

2.2 Beers’ Atlas of Worcester, 1870 – partial, west side, p. 7



For a larger view of this map see Supplement 2-A.

Land west of Newton Street consisted mostly of farms and open space, the pattern being broken only by Tatnuck Village, which was just a small cluster of houses and a mill or two surrounded by farms, at the intersection of Pleasant and Chandler Streets a couple of miles out.

The “New Common” (Elm Park) had not yet been made into anything resembling a park, and was still just a swampy open field west of the Agricultural Fair Grounds. Newton Hill, which was still privately owned, lay west of the New Common.

Newton Street stopped at Elm, and one seeking to get to Highland Street or points north would have taken Agricultural Street (now Russell), or cut across the field.

No houses yet stood on Pleasant Street between Abbott and the farmhouse near the intersection of Highland Street.

Along Highland, west of Agricultural, was the farm of John Hammond, opposite Newton Hill, extending northward a little past Jo Bill Road (now Institute). Back in 1854, Hammond had been one

² *Atlas of the City of Worcester*, F. W. Beers & Co., New York, 1870, re-printed by Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, 1971, p. 7. The term *urbanized* is used here to mean areas in which acreage had been divided into lots fronting on streets for residential and other uses, though not necessarily of high urban density.

of the sellers of property to the city for the “New Common,” the other being the Lincoln family.³ After his death in 1871, Hammond’s youngest son Fred succeeded him as the principal operator of the farm. From the Hammond property westward lay nothing but farm land as far as one could see.

At the base of Newton Hill, facing Pleasant Street near Highland sat a farm house with barns and associated out-buildings -- the hub of the major agricultural enterprise of the area. To this farm the Atlas attributed the name *J.Wetherell* (not visible in Figure 2.2). Across from the farm house was a pond which was fed and drained by Beaver Brook, and a sawmill in the area formed now by the intersection of June Street, Coolidge Road, and Pleasant Street. Along Pleasant Street, moving westerly from the intersection of Highland, the north side of the street in the Atlas showed house symbols bearing the names *L.Gates*, *C.Arnold*, *W.Richmond*, and *Dan’l Noyes* before the intersection of Flagg Street. From house directory listings published some years later it is seen that Leonard Gates was a butcher, Cyrus Arnold a soapmaker, Willard Richmond a realtor, and Daniel Noyes a farmer.⁴

Across Pleasant Street from the home of Willard Richmond was the farm and residence of Ephraim and Maria Chamberlain and their five children, as well as Maria’s parents.⁵ As was noted in Part One, Willard Richmond and Ephraim Chamberlain were married to daughters of Ira and Judith McFarland, and their respective tracts were parts of the old McFarland homestead which dated back to the first generation of residents of the town of Worcester, circa 1730. A third part of the old farm, consisting of the larger part of the hill on the south side of Pleasant Street, sprawling across the top and accessible only by a path through the Chamberlain property, was owned by Frederick Hammond of Highland Street. For him it was supplemental acreage, perhaps for hay or grazing, as there was no residence on the property at this time.

Coming back toward Newton Square along the south side of Pleasant Street, Hadwen Lane branched off and ran in a southerly direction to the residence of farmer Charles Hadwen, located about where the lane now turns right, then left and becomes Herbert Road. As a path but not yet a city street, it extended to Chandler Street past the residence of Obediah Hadwen.⁶ Continuing down Pleasant Street, the traveler passed Worcester’s original Catholic Cemetery, which was usually known by that name but was also known as the Tatnuck cemetery, a tract of two-to-three acres dotted by shade trees on the south side of the street between what would later become Howland Terrace and Monroe Avenue. The land for this first burial site for the Catholic population of Worcester had been purchased by Bishop Fenwick of the Springfield Diocese about 1835, for the sum of \$75. The first interment there was in 1835, when an Irish workman was killed by a premature blast in the “deep cut” in the slate near

³ Charles Nutt, *History of Worcester and Its People*, 4 volumes, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York, 1919, vol. I, p.428. Regarding the Hammond family and land, an unpublished paper by Peter Viles, M.D. retired, of Worcester, formerly on a website of the Hammond Heights Neighborhood Association, provides a brief history of the Hammond family’s ownership of the land and its conversion to residential use.

⁴ Census data from 1870 and 1880 showed comparable findings, but with a few minor differences, such as that for his occupation, the 1880 census gave for Leonard Gates “smoking house.” Using a smoking house was certainly part of what a butcher would do: smoking hams, etc., to keep them edible longer in the absence of refrigeration.

⁵ The census of 1870 found the entire family of Ephraim F. and Maria A. Chamberlain in residence: Ephraim, age 49, farmer, real estate value \$4000, personal estate \$1700; Maria A., age 43, keeping house; Agnes H., age 19, at home; Edwin, age 17, at home; Frank W., age 11, at school; Fred H., age 8, at school; and Bertha, age 6 ½, at home; all born in Massachusetts.

⁶ This path can be seen in a lithographic map of Worcester in 1878, drawn and published by O. H. Bailey and J. C. Hazen of Boston, reproduced by, and available from, the Worcester Historical Museum, 1986.

Bloomington by the *Boston and Worcester* Railroad.⁷ “After 1848,” according to Charles Nutt, “when St. John’s Cemetery was opened, the old cemetery gradually fell into disuse.”

A few more steps brought one back to the pond and the intersection of Highland Street. June Street did not yet exist, nor did Coolidge Road, and there was no rotary and no island – just a simple junction of two dirt roads, with a mill pond and a sawmill nearby.

Another view, 1886

The *Worcester Atlas of 1886*, prepared by G. M. Hopkins of Philadelphia, reflected a major and impressive step forward in the provision of detailed content and accuracy of city real estate maps of this nature.⁸ By using this atlas, as well as others which followed in 1896, 1911, and 1922, along with the City House Directories which were published in Worcester every even-numbered year beginning in 1888,⁹ one can reconstruct, with reasonable accuracy, how the city’s west side became converted during a span of a couple of decades, from substantially agricultural to mainly residential usage.¹⁰ In 1886, the area shown in Figure 2.3 stood at the brink of the transformation from rural to urban that was to sweep through the area over the next quarter-century.

The largest landowners of the area south and east of Hadwen Lane were W. E. Hadwen, J. W. Wetherell (misspelled as *Wetherill* on this map), and the heirs of John Hammond. Hadwen owned approximately ninety acres west of the Wetherell farm, including what became Hadwen Lane and Hadwen Road. This area comprised the backside of the hill on which Lenox was planned, part of what could be called the Chandler Street corridor.

Wetherell’s farm consisted of about 160-170 acres at this time. As can be seen in Figure 2.3, from Chandler Street it extended eastward across Pleasant Street and across Newton Hill, of which it encompassed about two-thirds, then across Highland Street west of the Hammond farm to the old peat bog, then westerly on Pleasant Street around the cemetery to Hadwen Lane before zig-zagging along the Hadwen land back to the point of origin on Chandler Street. Pleasant Street ran through the Wetherell farm, from a point near Abbott Street northwesterly past the residence area to the intersection with Highland Street at what would come to be known as Newton Square. June Street did not yet exist east of Chandler, and the pond fed by Beaver Brook was still in place, providing water power for the saw mill and drinking water for farm animals. The heart of the Wetherell farm - its residence, barns, and other out-buildings - was located at the base of Newton Hill on its westerly side, about where the Newton Square tennis courts are today.

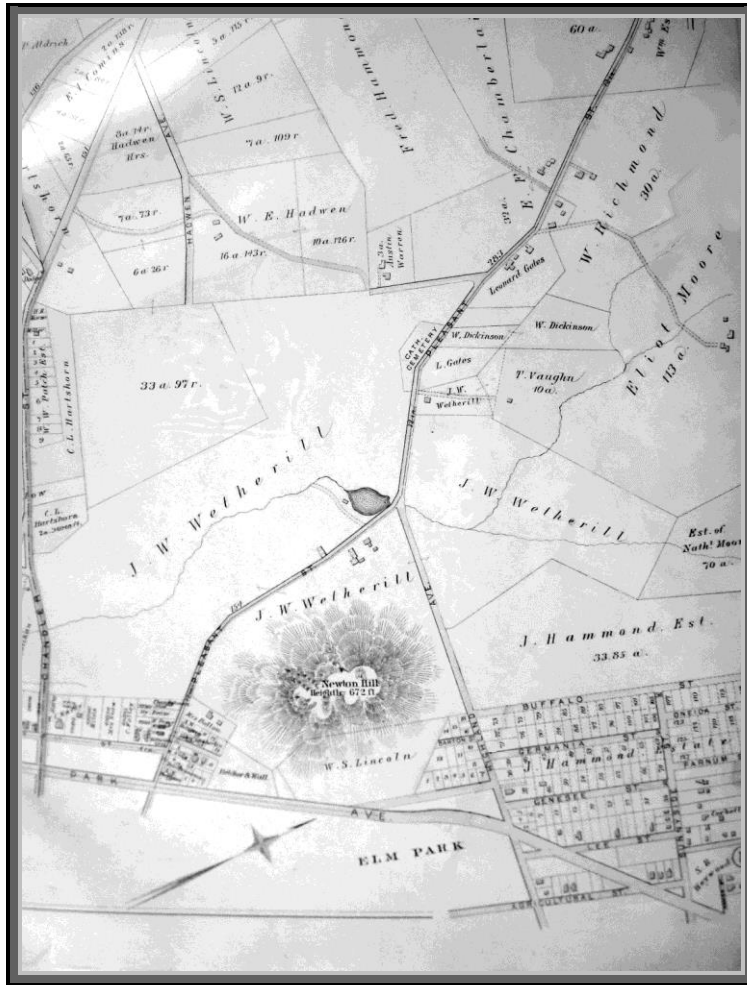
⁷ Nutt, vol. I, p. 483.

⁸ G. M. Hopkins, *Worcester Atlas of 1886*, Philadelphia, PA, 1886

⁹ These directories served for many years as reliable (not to say perfect) sources of information on who lived where, who owned the property, and the square footage, assessed valuations of land and buildings for taxation, on a biennial basis, beginning in 1888. From 1888 through 1918 the House Directory was published by Drew, Allis & Company of Worcester; from 1920 through 1938 the publisher was Sampson & Murdock of Boston; and since 1940 it has been R. L. Polk & Co. of Boston. In recent years, the House Directory has been included with the City Directory in a combined volume, by publishers R. L. Polk and Company.

¹⁰ Only a limited portion of that larger process is described here, however.

2.3 Atlas of Worcester, 1886, Plate 23



For a larger view of this map see Supplement 2-B.

(Note that the orientation of this map is rotated almost a quarter-turn clockwise, by comparison with that of 1870 shown above. See north arrow in lower portion of the map.)

The nature of the eventual development of the Wetherell farm appeared to hold the key to what would be possible, or at least likely, to occur at Lenox and other points west a few years afterward. The farm comprised the vast majority of the acreage through which one would pass, following either Highland or Pleasant Street from Park Avenue to the junction (Newton Square), then heading westward along Pleasant toward Tatnuck Village.

In effect, the pattern of the streets would funnel travelers through a kind of “gateway” to the Pleasant Street corridor to Tatnuck, along which new residential developments were clearly destined to come into being in the years ahead.

One possibility was that the form of development already underway in the Dewey-Mason-Hudson area might continue across “the boulevard” (which became Park Avenue) and extend westward. Whether such a style of development, and whether or not factories or other forms of commercial use would be allowed, was up to the land owners. There were only two – John Wetherell and the heirs of John Hammond – and in neither case did it appear likely that such a development pattern would be in line with intentions.

Under a plan filed in 1879, about half of the acreage of the Hammond family along Highland Street had been subdivided into lots.¹¹ Housing construction had not yet begun, but three new streets had been established connecting Highland to Sunnyside Street (the extension of Jo Bill Road, both later renamed Institute Road). Genesee, Germania, and Buffalo Streets were soon changed to Westland, Germain, and Haviland, and two more new streets extended north of Sunnyside: Oneida and Farnum Streets. Known as *Hammond Heights*, the development was being marketed to a very affluent portion

¹¹ Worcester District Registry of Deeds, 1050: 653, Jan-01-1879; 1051: 653, Aug-01-1879; 1292: 653, Oct-01-1888.

of the city's population. The development plan for the area still being "on paper" only, Fred Hammond continued farming the land and residing in the house, which is now 264 Highland Street.

Early Photographs of Newton Square

Events of the mid-to-late 1880s by John W. Wetherell would make clear his intention to guide the development of his land in a similar manner, as will be seen. But first, a look at the Wetherell farm, in photographs, and of Col. Wetherell himself, and his wife Hester, whose lineage in Worcester was "long and strong," is in order. A number of photographs of the Wetherell farm and its locale taken in the 1890s, collected from multiple sources and shown below, and on the next two pages, provide a nice visual connection with the time and place. Some of the photos are from a feature story in a 1941 edition of the *Sunday Telegram*; others are from a book of photographs of the Worcester area taken during the same era, published in 1895, entitled *Picturesque Worcester*.¹² The *Sunday Telegram* article focussed on photographs taken by Edward M. Woodward, who grew up there and who later and for many years was Principal of South High School. The photos offered readers at that time a unique perspective on how the area had changed over the past fifty years, a kind of retrospective on the year 1891. The contemporary reader can glean a view of people more than two-thirds of a century ago as they in turn looked back on a small piece of their own history some half a century earlier.



Worcester *Sunday Telegram*, May 11, 1941

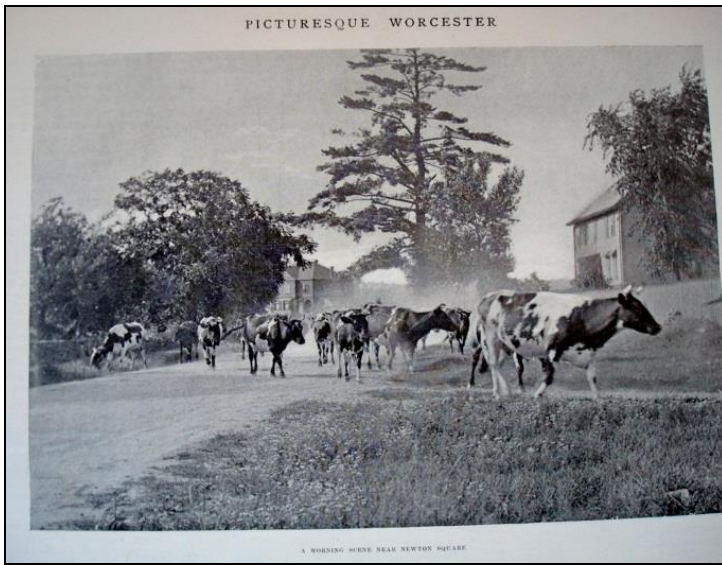
The Wetherell farm house, with its long stockade fence and out-buildings to the rear, is seen from Pleasant Street, looking westerly toward the intersection with Highland Street beyond the house.

Text of the caption:

"The Wetherell farmhouse on Pleasant street, near Newton Square, which was taken care of by Albert E. Woodward, father of Edward M. Woodward, former principal of South High School, who took the series of old-time pictures appearing today. Mr. Woodward lived here with his father for twelve years before he went to college, married, and then built his present home at 736 Pleasant street, where he has lived for 46 years. Trolley cars had not made their way that far west in Worcester at this time. (Photo by Edward M. Woodward)"

Very nearly the same perspective on the farm can be seen in the next photograph, from Kingsley and Knab's *Picturesque Worcester*, which shows a herd of dairy cows in "a morning scene," probably headed to the barn for the morning milking.

¹² Kingsley and Knab, *Picturesque Worcester*. The emphasis here on the Newton Square area is partly because these photos are available to us, comprising a richer collection than is available for the area that would become Lenox, and because they are so helpful in conveying a sense of what the agricultural west side of Worcester looked like at the time.



“A Morning Scene Near Newton Square”
Kingsley and Knab, *Picturesque Worcester*

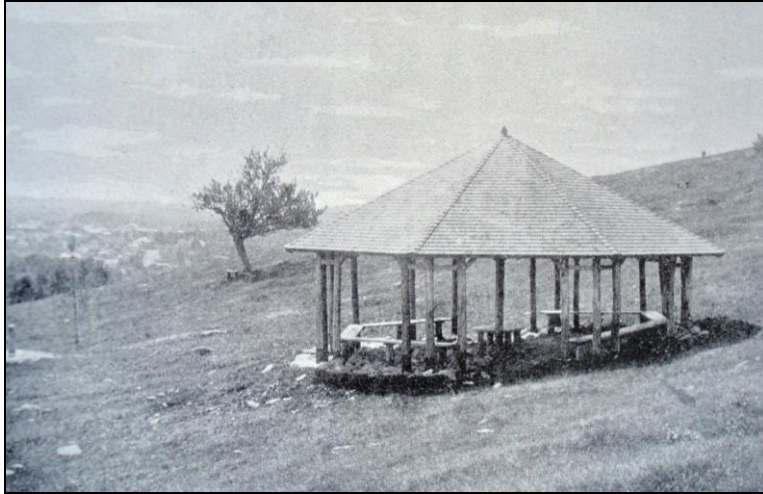
It appears that the cows were being herded toward the barn for the morning milking, and, judging from their direction, they likely had been grazing the fields now known as the Coolidge-Longfellow area.

The brick home in the background was the residence of Edward J. Ryan, who, according to the article in the *Sunday Telegram*, was the “former New England Superintendent of Railway Mail service.” It is now 711-713 Pleasant Street, the first structure past Newton Square on the north side, now covered with siding and used for commercial offices.



Courtesy of Worcester Historical Museum

The sawmill across Pleasant Street from the farmhouse was owned and operated by Wing Kelly (whose daughter was Abbey Kelly Foster) prior to about 1835. Kelly’s name appears on a “composite historical” map prepared for Caleb Wall’s *Reminiscences of Worcester*, published in 1877. The picture was taken approximately from June Street. Newton Hill is in the background. In the mid-1800s the land and the mill came to be owned by Rejoice Newton and subsequently by his heirs, John W. and Hester Newton Wetherell.



Kingsley and Knab, *Picturesque Worcester*, p.44.

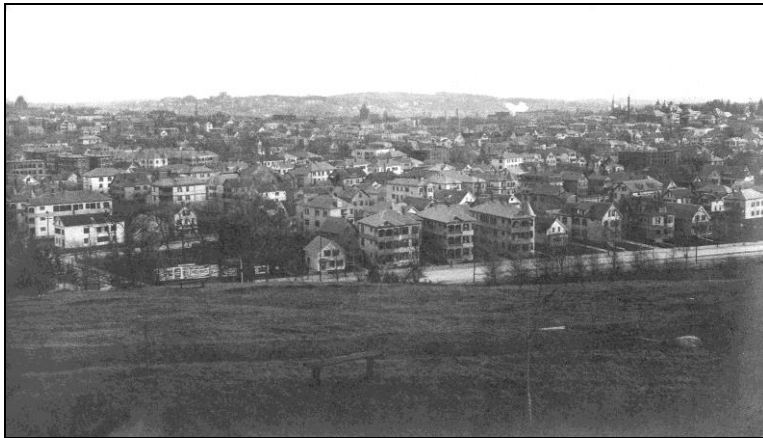
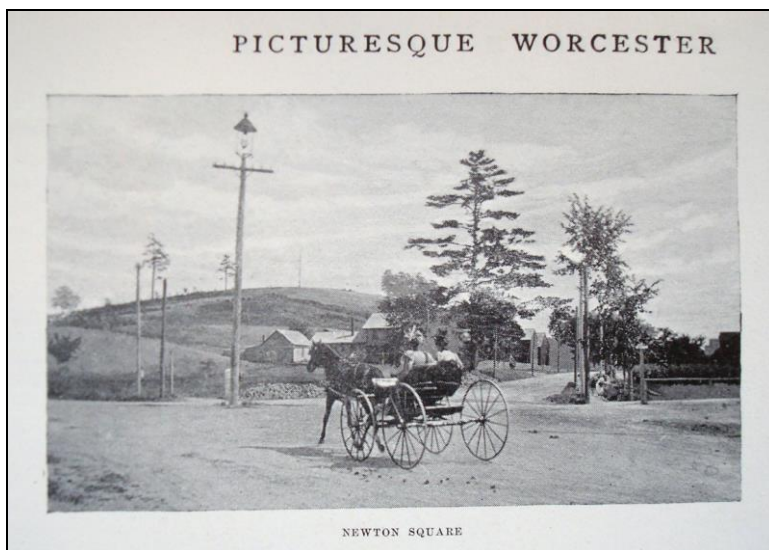


Image from photograph (partial), ca. 1901, photographer unknown, collection of Harry Richardson.



Kingsley and Knab, *Picturesque Worcester*, p.41

This pavilion was located on the easterly slope of Newton Hill, overlooking the core of the city. In the hazy background was “New Worcester,” now known as Webster Square.

The view across Park Avenue (middle) was taken at or near the pavilion about 1901. The road joining Park Avenue on the left side is Elm Street. Billboards appear to dominate the empty lot at the corner. The left-most of the three three-deckers now has two-story columns and is in commercial use.

The properties along Park Avenue to the right of the three deckers now consist of a parking lot and garage, and the eight-story Park Avenue Tower.

The bottom photo was taken from Pleasant Street looking across the intersection which was to become Newton Square. The Wetherell farm faces Pleasant Street to the ladies’ right, June Street comes in from the right, and Highland Street veers off to the left. Newton Hill, beyond the farm, was by this time owned by the city and incorporated into Elm Park, though not yet put to much visible use. The flag pole barely visible at the top of the hill stood at the peak of the hill, 672 feet above sea level.

The utility pole in the center of the intersection carried electric and telephone lines, and at its top was either an electric arc light or a Welsbach gas burner (mantle format, as in camping lanterns). The fact that there is no evidence of trolley tracks or associated catenary overhead on

any of the streets in view dates this photo before 1896, when streetcar lines ran through the square.

Also, one can see a series of rooftops along Pleasant Street to the right of the frame, those of the houses built across from the farm. There appears to be a fence in front of the Wetherell (Woodward) house, apparently made of wire or a wire mesh, and standing what looks to be six feet or more in height, and one or more persons appear to be squatting, probably working, across the street from the house.

John W. Wetherell

The caption to the photograph from the *Sunday Telegram* made clear that the owner, *J. Wetherell*, did not live at the farm, but instead had a manager in residence, Mr. Albert Woodward, and it was his son Edward who took the photographs. Mr. Wetherell did, however, live elsewhere in Worcester, and he was a man of considerable stature in the community, and one who would be a key figure in guiding the manner in which residential development would come to the inner-westside of the city.

Colonel John W. Wetherell, as he was known, was born in Oxford in 1820, attended local schools there, and Leicester Academy before entering Yale College. After Yale, he attended Harvard where he received a degree in law, then settled in Worcester about 1846. According to Charles Nutt, Wetherell was active in the abolitionist movement, a frequent orator at meetings of the “Freedom Clubs” of the Free-Soil movement in Worcester in the late 1840s and early 1850s.¹³ In 1859, he served a one-year term as president of the Worcester Common Council, an indication of his standing in the local political scene.

About 1855, Wetherell, in his mid-thirties and well established as an attorney, married Hester Newton, daughter of Rejoice and Rebecca Lincoln Newton.¹⁴ Hester’s father was a prominent attorney and political notable in the city, and her mother was a daughter of Levi Lincoln (Sr.), who served as Attorney General in Jefferson’s first term (1801-05), and as Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth, 1807-1808. Rebecca’s brothers included Levi Lincoln, Jr., eight-term Governor of Massachusetts (1825-34), and William Lincoln (1801-1843), attorney, law partner of her husband, and noted “antiquarian,” author of the first significant history of the town of Worcester.¹⁵

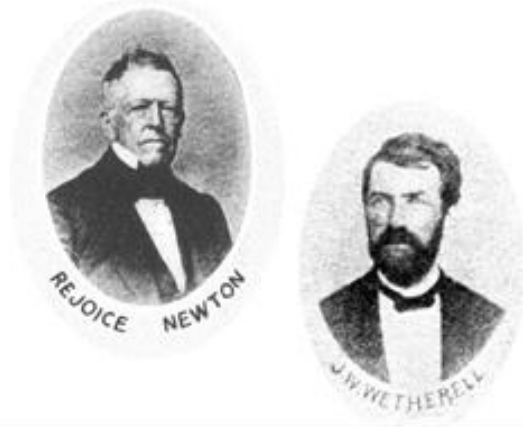
The Wetherells’ primary residence was at 2 State Street, around the corner from the Courthouse on Main Street, a stately side-by-side double house built by his wife’s father. They may have used the farm on Pleasant Street as their “country home” – a place to go when they preferred to get away from the bustle of city life, even though one place was barely two miles from the other.

Rejoice Newton, like John Wetherell, was not a native of Worcester. He grew up in Greenfield, on the Connecticut River, studied law and came to Worcester where he initiated a successful law practice. He served as County (District) Attorney, 1814-1824; as Representative to the General Court, 1829-30-

¹³ Nutt, 1919, vol. I, p. 497.

¹⁴ The U.S. Census of 1850 found Wetherell, single, age 29, boarding at the American Temperance House.

¹⁵ William Lincoln and Charles Hersey, 1836/1862.



31; and as State Senator in 1834. Newton married into wealth, which included substantial land holdings on the west side, but he no doubt also did quite well on his own through his work as an attorney and through dealings in real estate and other matters of local commerce.¹⁶

Rebecca Newton and her daughter, Hester Newton Wetherell, were prominent members of the Worcester Children's Friend Society throughout their lives. Rebecca was one of the founders of the organization, and both served as case managers and as the organization's treasurer in their respective times. Hester served the

Society for more than forty years, resigning only a few months before her death in 1899.¹⁷

During the Civil War John Wetherell was one of the four members of the Governor's Council of Governor John Andrew, this office being the source of the honorary title *Colonel*, which was a tradition of the time. Colonel Wetherell was said to have been very proud of the part he played in the establishment and financial support of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment. To Wetherell, it was said, was due "*an appreciable portion of the credit of raising the famous regiment of colored troops which the brave Robert Shaw commanded.*"¹⁸

The Sale of Newton Hill to the City

The land triangle enclosed by Park Avenue, Highland Street, and Pleasant Street, known as "Newton Hill," had for many years been in the family of the Lincolns, the Newtons, and now the Wetherells. The hill had taken its name during the mid-1800s from owner Rejoice Newton. By the 1880s a few parcels within this triangle had been sold for residential or commercial use near the intersection of Park and Pleasant, and a small planned development appeared in the 1886 Atlas on the south side of Highland near Park, across from the Hammond residence. But the larger share of the acreage was still owned by John and Hester Wetherell, and a smaller portion, facing Park Avenue, by Hester's cousin William Sever Lincoln. A brother of William was Edward Winslow Lincoln, the prime mover in the design and the establishment of Elm Park, and during this era the Commissioner of the city's Parks Department.¹⁹

¹⁶ Whether Newton acquired the land between between Highland, Pleasant, and Chandler Streets by purchase or through his wife's inheritance is unknown to this author, but presumably could be determined through deed research. In any case, history has left his surname far better imprinted on the area than it has that of his son-in-law, John W. Wetherell.

¹⁷ Carolyn J. Lawes, *Women and Reform in a New England Community, 1815-1860*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 2000.

¹⁸ *Worcester Telegram*, October 4, 1897. In transcription form, it is Supplement 2-J. It well done and is good reading.

¹⁹ Nutt, vol. I, p. 431. The Commissioner's annual reports during his term of office, 1870-1896, available in City Documents, are colorful, unrestrained, and highly opinionated, and they are well worth sampling, even if sometimes challenging to follow.

In 1888, the Wetherells and Lincoln, plus the owners of small plots off Highland Street, sold the entire tract of land to the City of Worcester for the sum of \$50,000.²⁰ The City's purpose was to extend Elm Park, which by this time, according to Nutt, was proving to be a great success. The possibility of the city's purchasing the land had been a political issue for some time prior to the sale. Some felt that the acquisition amounted to a mis-use of municipal resources to enhance the physical aesthetics of the section of town in which the residents had the most resources and needed the least help. As historian Roy Rosenzweig saw it, working class people in other areas of the city needed better playground facilities, ball fields, and the like, and such improvements would yield a greater improvement in the quality of urban life for those citizens than would an extension of Elm Park for the affluent people of the west side. Moreover, he claimed, members of a wealthy elite of west-siders applied pressure to get the city to buy the land to extend the park.

If, as was claimed, a "west side establishment" existed, one capable of applying pressure to elected leaders to get their way in the Elm Park controversy, Col. John and Hester Newton Wetherell, surely were members-in-good-standing. Whatever influence might have been wielded by whomever, the Wetherells emerged from the issue well-positioned for conversion of all or part of their farm for residential development. Aside from the Hammond Heights section on Highland Street, they owned all of the usable land along both of the streets which, along with Park Avenue, framed the Newton Hill extension of Elm Park. Bearing in mind that the hill was largely treeless, and offered a serene pastoral landscape for houses along the two streets, the situation seemed ripe for the construction of high- or moderately high-value houses for some of the more affluent among the city's expanding population.

To the extent that the city succeeded in turning Newton Hill into an attraction as an extension of Elm Park, it was apparent that there was potential for the remaining parts of the Wetherell land, particularly along Pleasant and Highland Streets facing it, to appreciate in value. Seeing this, the Wetherells insisted that a restriction be placed in the deed pertaining to future valuations of their remaining land:

Provided always, however, and this conveyance is made upon the express conditions, stipulations and reservation,, which are a part of the consideration moving the grantors to this conveyance, that is to say: First, That the City of Worcester shall not, at any time hereafter lay any assessments for Betterments of any name, character or description whatsoever upon any of the remaining land of the grantors or either of them, in consequence of the dedication of the estate hereby conveyed, to the uses and purposes of a Public Park.

Thus, the City was precluded from use of the "betterment" concept to raise the assessed value of the Wetherell properties surrounding the park extension, and the language of the proviso clearly sought to make the stipulation valid on a permanent basis, rather than limited by a specified period of time. This did not mean, however, that the land could never be assigned a higher valuation. In due time, nearby land values could be expected to increase for other reasons rooted in the conversion of agricultural to urban use and the establishment of residential districts where values were set by the open market.

²⁰ Worcester District Registry of Deeds, 1266: 645-646. Jun-01-1888. This transfer of 45.77 acres constituted the major transaction of several involved in the sale. A smaller lot (15,058 square feet) was conveyed by the Wetherells to the City in 1266: 642, Jun-01-1888.

The situation facing Wetherell obviously was neither an accident of fortune nor an unanticipated windfall. In 1887 and 1888, during and shortly after the negotiations regarding the sale of the hill to the city, Col. Wetherell had filed a series of subdivision plans relating to his holdings along Pleasant and Highland Streets, and in 1890, after June Street had been extended to the intersection at Newton Square, he filed a fourth dealing with that part of June on which he had frontage. These four plans amounted to an inter-related set constituting an overall plan for the conversion of the four street segments intersecting at Newton Square to residential use. Each plan can be viewed in the Supplement, as noted below.

- (1) May, 1887 (Registry 1235: 653): 30 lots on Pleasant Street between Abbott and June Streets. (Supplement 2-C)
- (2) October, 1887 (Registry 1247: 653): 22 lots along Highland Street beyond Hammond Heights, through and beyond Newton Square, out Pleasant Street to the end of the Wetherell property at Gates' farm; and 20 lots on Midland Street (new) running parallel to Pleasant and Highland. Revisions later added Huntley and Newton Streets (changed to Avenue). (Supplement 2-D)
- (3) December, 1888 (Registry 1276: 653): 10 lots along the southwest (even number) side of Pleasant Street from June Street to the boundary of the Catholic Cemetery, plus unnumbered lots on Franconia Road off June Street, running to the rear of the cemetery. (Supplement 2-E)
- (4) May, 1890 (Registry 1320: 653): 24 lots on both sides of June Street, from today's numbers 39 and 40 to Newton Square. (Supplement 2-F)

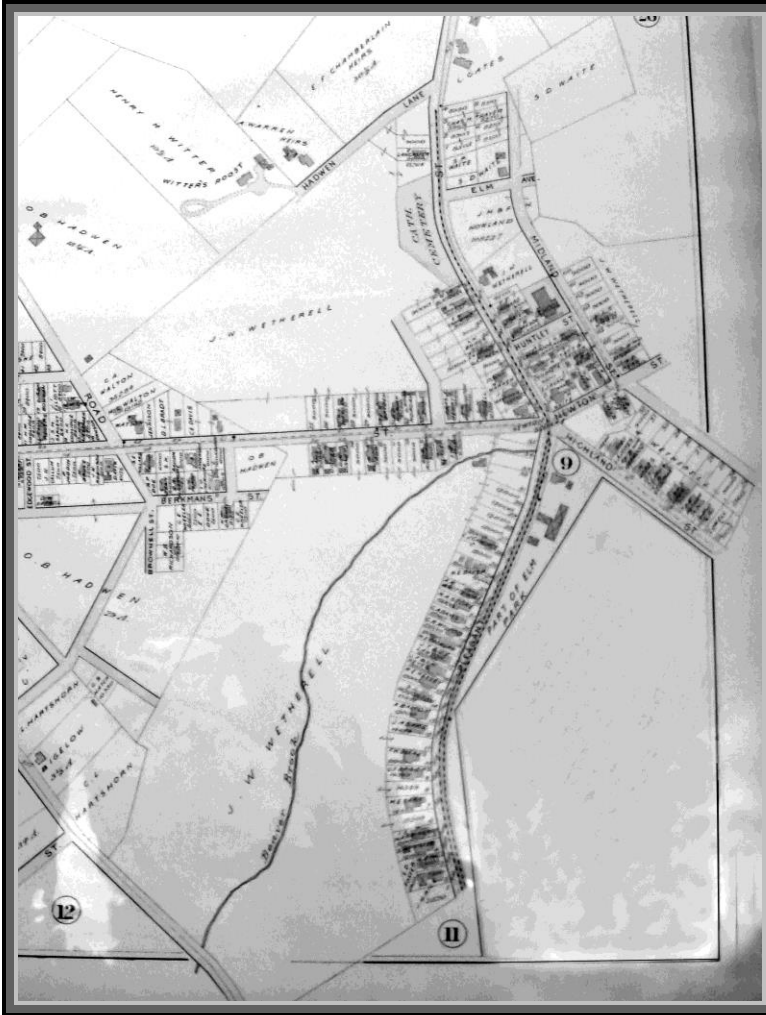
The four interlocking plans yielded a total of 106 building lots. A few changes were made in the configuration, especially at the point of sale to buyers wanting larger lots than were outlined, and several of the lots were eventually used for streets leading to other residential areas, also constructed on land owned at this time by the Wetherells. Restrictions imposed in the deeds limited construction to residential dwellings, explicitly precluding all commercial and industrial uses, and mandated "*... that the grantee herein shall erect on the lot hereby conveyed a dwelling house for his own use and occupancy within one year from the date hereof.*"

The owner-occupancy requirement effectively precluded building for the purpose of absentee rental management, as well as the common practice of intermediary speculation, that is, buying and building to sell. The requirement that buyers build within a year also contravened the practice of speculative purchases wherein buyers would wait until a preferred time at which either to build or to sell the property, and it offset the possibility of delays arising from economic downturns and the like. Nothing in the language of the deeds, however, placed any restriction on the number of residential units, or apartments, that could be included in the structures. This left open the possibility of two- and three-family homes being constructed, along with what was expected to be the predominant form, the single-family house.

Once June Street had been connected, about 1890, Newton Square had become a four-point intersection. A fifth member, Newton Avenue, was to be added in 1895 by another Wetherell site

development plan.²¹ The pattern of the streets and the extent to which residential development had occurred by 1896 can be seen in Figure 2.4, from the Atlas of 1896.²²

2.4 From the Richards *Atlas of 1896*, Plate 27 (partial)



Photograph of map plate 27, courtesy of Worcester Public Library.
For a larger version of this map see Supplement 2-G.

The dashed lines along Pleasant Street represent trolley tracks. At this time the tracks ran to the end of the Wetherell holdings, just short of Hadwen Lane, beyond which residential development had yet barely proceeded.

Aside from the four parts of the development plan underway, there remained at this time considerable acreage in agricultural use in two locations: (1) beyond June Street westerly to the base of the hill, which would undergo the transformation to urban residential use in the mid-1900s, and (2) behind the houses along June and Pleasant Streets, wherein ran Beaver Brook, extending to Chandler Street and the land of O. B. Hadwen to the west.

Also evident is the old Wetherell-Woodward farmhouse, along with a few farm buildings, just below the intersection. The purchase agreement for the city's acquisition of Newton Hill had specified that the Wetherells could retain the farmhouse and other farm buildings on a parcel of land (as shown) for the rest of their lives, and those remnants of

the farm remained in the care of Albert Woodward throughout most of the 1890s. As the Wetherells still maintained their home on State Street, it is likely that they used the farm as their "country home" - a place to go when they preferred to get away from the bustle of city life, even though one place was barely two miles from the other.

²¹ Worcester District Registry of Deeds, 1470: 655. Although multiple references are made to this plan in various deeds of transfer, it could not be found in the online records of the Registry.

²² Richards *Atlas of Worcester*, 1896, Plate 27 (partial, from photograph of plastic-covered copy, courtesy of Worcester Public Library.

Development Progress of the Wetherell Subdivisions

Pleasant Street across from Newton Hill

After the filing of the development plan in May, 1887, construction proceeded quickly. By 1896 there were twenty houses of varying types, sizes, and values in this stretch of about four tenths of a mile, and by 1900 there were twenty eight, taking up most of the house lots. This amounted to a density of about one house every 75 linear feet of frontage. Two building sites remaining empty were later used for new streets connecting to the Coolidge-Longfellow area which was built in the mid-to-late 1920s.

By 1896, the trolley system had reached this part of Pleasant Street, its single track and overhead catenary wire system running through Newton Square and out to about Hadwen Lane. The trolley changed the trip downtown into a ride of only a few minutes, for a price affordable to the middle class, thereby opening the entire Pleasant Street corridor to residential development. Newton Square and eventually neighborhoods beyond it along Pleasant Street became “streetcar suburbs.”²³ Pleasant Street during this era was a far more important pathway into the city for west side residents than was Highland Street, on which one line ran only as far as Sever Street and another came in from Russell Street then stopped at Park Avenue, serving Elm Park and the Fairgrounds.

According to the census of 1900, just under half the houses in the segment were one-family structures, the remainder consisting of mostly two-family, and a few three-family structures. Three-quarters were owner-occupied, a fact which belies the language of the property deeds which implied a full, 100-percent, owner-occupancy rate.²⁴ Most of the residents were families, and most of them, but not all, had children in the home, and a few persons of advanced age were among the generally younger group. The street was predominantly, but not entirely, of English or Yankee origin, mostly, but not entirely, protestant.²⁵ The census showed people along the street facing the new park land to be members of the city’s rising middle class, a mix of white collar and blue collar occupations, including salesmen, clerks, and bookkeepers; machinists, drivers, operatives, carpenters and other tradesmen; policemen; merchants, managers, and professionals.

June Street from Hadwen Road to Newton Square

June Street, as noted earlier, was extended from Chandler Street to Newton Square about 1890, and by 1896 about two-thirds of the lots platted by Wetherell had houses standing on them. The first house on the south side of June, at the intersection, was a large two-family design which had a family in number 2 and the “Newton Square Club” at number 4.²⁶

²³ A good source on the concept of the “streetcar suburbs” is a study of three suburbs of Boston during the era for which the author took that as his title: Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* Harvard University Press, 1978.

²⁴ A count from the census listing for the street revealed 22 properties, of which 10 were single-families, and 16 (73%) were owner-occupied.

²⁵ Inference by reference to surnames and countries of origin in the census of 1900.

²⁶ Efforts to find out what the Newton Square Club was proved unsuccessful. The club appeared in the House Directories every edition through 1910 before being listed as vacant in 1912. The property was owned by the residents of number 2, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Tyler. Mr. Tyler was an express driver, per the census of 1900, not usually the occupation of someone owning a property as expensive as this one (valued at \$12,700 in 1912), so it is possible that the Tylers operated the club, whatever it was, possibly some kind of gentlemen’s social club (cigars, billiards, and brandy?).

Beaver Brook had for some time been channeled underground, running beneath Newton Square, and by 1896 the old sawmill had been demolished and the pond eliminated. The brook continued underground in conduits through the acreage which later became the Coolidge-Longfellow area. By 1896 there were a few single and two-family structures in place and by the early 1900s the strip had almost filled out.

The houses built along this section of June were similar in styles, sizes, and values to those of Pleasant Street across from the park. Also, the occupations of residents, drawn from the House and City Directories of 1906, showed a range very much like that of the people on Pleasant Street: drivers, machine operators, foremen, and a wheelwright, as well as salesmen, small shop merchants, a Baptist minister, and a physician.

Highland Street, from Park Avenue to Newton Square

The surviving children of John Hammond by this time were actively converting the old family farm into a new subdivision of large, high value homes known as Hammond Heights. This area appeared to be emerging as an extension of the *old west side* of the city, its most prestigious residential area. It began on Lee Street, which was already there, and added three more streets connecting Highland to Institute (formerly Jo Bill) Road, extending the sequence going back through Russell, Dover, Schussler, Trowbridge, West, Boynton, and Lancaster Streets. To the north, Hammond Heights came close to the area owned by Stephen Salisbury III which, about the turn of the century, began its transformation from farm land into Bancroft Heights, centered on Massachusetts Avenue. These two new neighborhoods, plus Montvale, another new district on the north side of Salisbury Street, were being offered to the most affluent members of the city's expanding population.²⁷

In 1890 there was still only the two-family homestead of the Hammonds on the old farm tract, the land having been divided into lots and streets laid out, with all the sub-surface pipe and wire utilities which accompanied the building of new streets. During the 1890s, seven houses were constructed along Highland in the Hammond Heights part of the street. Most of them were oriented to face the connecting streets, giving side views to traffic along Highland Street.

Beyond Hammond Heights lay a span of vacant land extending to what later became Suburban Road. Beyond that point, nine new houses had been constructed by the turn of the century on lots laid out in Wetherell's October, 1888 Plan, each overlooking the extended Elm Park, which was soon to include tennis courts near the intersection. In this span of some eleven houses, the "middle class yankee" pattern seen on the Pleasant and June Street segments remained in evidence, but with a greater preponderance of managerial and business occupations than was true of the other street segments. Moreover, house and total property values ran considerably higher along this segment of Highland Street than was the case on Pleasant or June Street.

Pleasant Street from Newton Square to Hadwen Lane

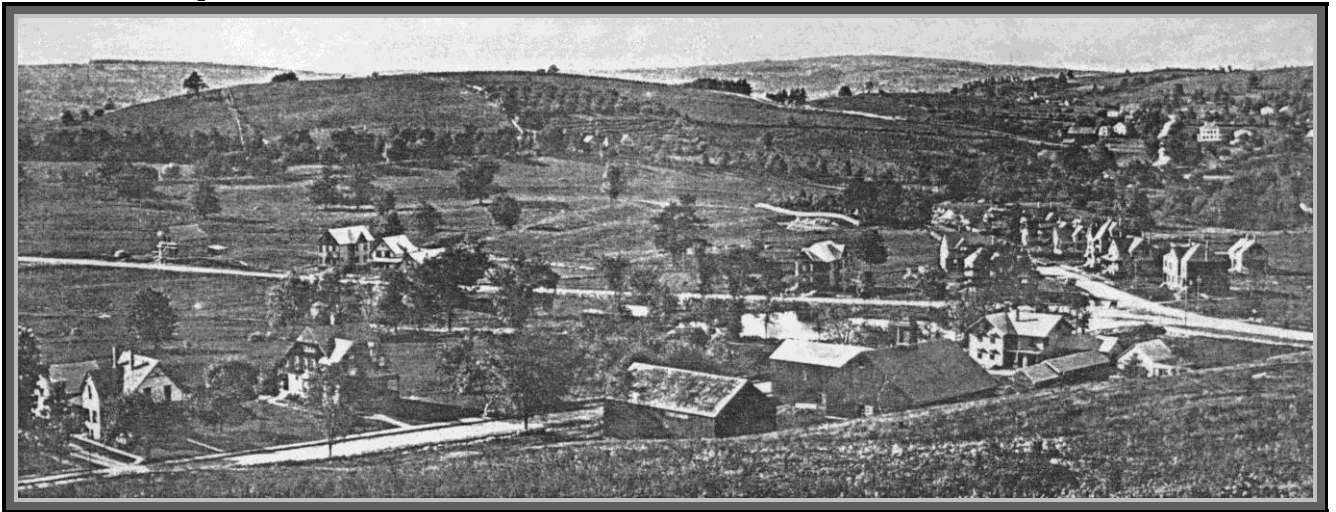
The 1896 Atlas showed seven houses on each side of this segment of Pleasant Street. The occupations of residents listed in the Directory of 1906 reveal a pattern similar to that of outer Highland Street. Here were mostly white collar professionals, managers, a school principal (Edward

²⁷ Susan McDaniel Ceccacci, *Living at the City's Green Edge*, 2015, a history of the Massachusetts Avenue Historic District.

M. Woodward), salesmen, and superintendants. On the south side of Pleasant, the Catholic Cemetery was still there, visible from a distance as a park-like clump of trees. There had been no interments for many years, dating back to about mid-century, according to Nutt, but there remained the graves of persons buried during the few years of the cemetery's use. About 1906, the bodies were removed to St. John's Cemetery and the land was sold for residential development. Houses now bearing the numbers 744 through 766 Pleasant Street, and those of the northerly end of Franconia Road, now stand on the land formerly used as the cemetery. ²⁸

One of Edward M. Woodward's photographs, taken in 1891, was displayed on the cover of the May, 1916 issue of *Worcester Magazine*. ²⁹ (Figure 2.5) In the background is the hill upon which Lenox would later be constructed.

2.5 Newton Square area as seen from Newton Hill, 1891



From the upper (earlier) photograph on the cover of *Worcester Magazine*, May, 1916, courtesy of Worcester Public Library. (For a larger, downloadable versions of this image, see *Image Catalog*, item 3, and the same image with the author's annotations, item 4)

In the foreground, Pleasant Street runs past the Wetherell-Woodward farm and meets June and Highland Streets at what would become Newton Square. Pleasant Street runs beyond the intersection through a line of houses along both sides, then passes the Catholic Cemetery (visible as a clump of trees) and winds invisibly around to the right before appearing as a path headed straight out between the Chamberlain farm on the left and the Willard Richmond home on the right. The hill beyond June Street is the location of the Chamberlain and Hammond farms, where Lenox would rise some two decades later.

The mill pond and the old sawmill which it powered are still there, the pond taking what appears to be about half to three-quarters of an acre across from the farmhouse. Most likely the size of the pond was reduced somewhat when June Street was connected to Pleasant and Highland about 1889 or 1890. Behind the Catholic Cemetery, there is an access road and a pit, probably where soil or gravel had been removed. The Warren and Witter residences are barely visible along the path (Hadwen Lane) cutting across the base of the hill, beneath the orchard in the upper-center. Mr. Witter's residence was called "Witter's Roost" in the Atlas of 1896.

Although was not commonly known as such, probably because it was below his "station" in society, Col. Wetherell was in fact a real estate developer. He was not just selling a few parcels along the streets

²⁸ *Worcester Sunday Telegram, Everybody's Magazine*, May 11, 1941, p. 2. Also Nutt, vol. I, p. 483.

²⁹ It is another of the set taken by Edward M. Woodward featured in the *Sunday Telegram* noted earlier. The version on the cover of *Worcester Magazine* was far superior for the purposes of copying and reprinting here.

running through his property. He was filing plat plans and placing deeded restrictions on the uses of the land and the buildings constructed thereon, in the manner of the sub-division practice of the day.³⁰ For better or worse, he had a very strong influence on how the entire Newton Square section of the growing city developed.

In October, 1897, Col. Wetherell died, at the age of 77. His wife Hester Newton Wetherell died two years later at 76. The couple had no surviving children, two infants having been lost at birth,³¹ and neither had surviving siblings, so it was the end of the genealogical line for both the Newtons and the Wetherells. "By her death," the *Gazette* wrote in its obituary, "another family, of those which have played such prominent parts in the history of the city, is no more."³²

The *Telegram's* obituary notice for Col. Wetherell, a tribute to the man and his accomplishments, spoke of his great interest during his later years in the management of his (and his wife's) estate, and the author made an interesting observation on the consequences of Mr. Wetherell's disposition of the estate for residential development:

Much of the neighborhood of Newton square was comprised in the farm, and Col Wetherell so disposed of it that no disfigured buildings have been erected, and the result is one of the most desirable localities in Worcester, with a nucleus of other neighborhoods, which are gradually becoming one with it. ³³

Hester Wetherell's obituary notice also mentioned the Colonel's careful disposition of the farm for development, calling the area "*one of the prettiest and most desirable of Worcester's out-lying residence sections.*" It added that development was still in progress: "*... the opening up of the estate for sale has been going steadily on under the direction of Albert E. Woodward, who still runs the Wetherell farm on the Pleasant street side of Newton hill near the square.*"

Thus, under the guidance of Mr. Woodward and the trustee of the estate, attorney Lincoln N. Kinnicutt, lot sales continued along the four street segments, as well as Midland Street. The old Wetherell-Woodward farmhouse, at that time bearing the address 383 Pleasant Street, became vacant in 1900, and by 1902 it and the barns and other out-buildings were gone, the land now having folded into the Newton Hill part of Elm Park.

In 1900, the field between June Street and the edge of the property at the rise of the hill was purchased for residential development by an incorporated entity known as the Worcester Real Estate

³⁰ The "Real Estate Record" part of the House Directory of 1892, listed under John W. Wetherell a number of properties, land and buildings, in the city, including the primary residence at 2 State Street, the farm residence and other buildings on Pleasant Street, and the major part of the farm identified as "Pleasant, June and Chandler." The farm was said to consist of 100.27 acres, with a taxable valuation of \$17,000 (\$170 per acre), excluding buildings. By 1896, the acreage had fallen to some 95.5 acres as a result of parcels being sold off along the three streets, while the taxable valuation had risen to \$29,400, or \$308 per acre. The record for 1900 showed 91.5 acres valued at \$36,600 (\$400 per acre).

³¹ Carolyn J. Lawes, p. 103.

³² *Worcester Evening Gazette*, Sep-08-1899, p. 4.

³³ Obituary notice for J. W. Wetherell, *Worcester Telegram*, October 4, 1897. (Transcript in Supplement 2-I) Among the pallbearers at his funeral was Senator George Frisbie Hoar. *Worcester Evening Gazette*, Oct-05-1897, p. 1.

Association, of which the President and Treasurer was Herbert C. Fisher.³⁴ Six years later, a development plan known simply as “Newton Square” laid out more than 100 lots along Franconia, Wetherell, and Nevada Streets off June Street, plus Monroe Avenue and Howland Terrace which criss-crossed the others connecting Pleasant Street to Hadwen Road.³⁵ The development was somewhat slow getting started. The 1910 House Directory listed only six houses yet bearing numbers, with a few others under construction. In style and format of the housing on the lots, the area closely resembled other segments built on the streets of the old Wetherell farm, and the area’s early residents were similar in occupational, social, and demographic composition as well.

West of the Wetherell Properties

Beyond the Wetherell farm along Pleasant Street, where Lenox and other residential districts would later be developed, the land in the 1880s was still almost entirely agricultural. The property ownership map in Figure 2.6, created from the 1886 Atlas, shows the approximate boundaries of the various farms along Pleasant Street between Hadwen Lane and Moreland Street, a distance of about eight tenths of a mile. In 1886 there were only six landowners along that path, plus two or three others who were close enough to be considered in the path of any future wave of development (Eliot Moore, A.Warren, Mrs. Flagg).

One of the six owners was Fred Hammond, who had no residence there, and whose acreage had no frontage on the street. All the other landowners lived on their land, and all but one were engaged in farming.³⁶ The non-farming landowner was Willard Richmond, the real estate dealer, who held a bit over thirty acres at his site opposite the Chamberlain farm, which he probably leased out for agricultural use.

Four properties in the area were owned by people of the surname Moore, probably all related, and a street heading uphill north of Pleasant Street was called Moreland Street (sometimes spelled ‘Mooreland’ in early listings). The property of Mrs. Flagg, which had been in her late husband’s family for several generations, had Flagg Street running through it, on its way to Salisbury. The dotted line

³⁴ L. N. Kinnicutt, acting as trustee of the estate of Hester N. Wetherell,, sold the land to James H. Howland (Registry 1641: 465-66, Mar-01-1900). Howland then sold it to Worcester Real Estate Associates (Registry 1656: 22, Jun-01-1900).

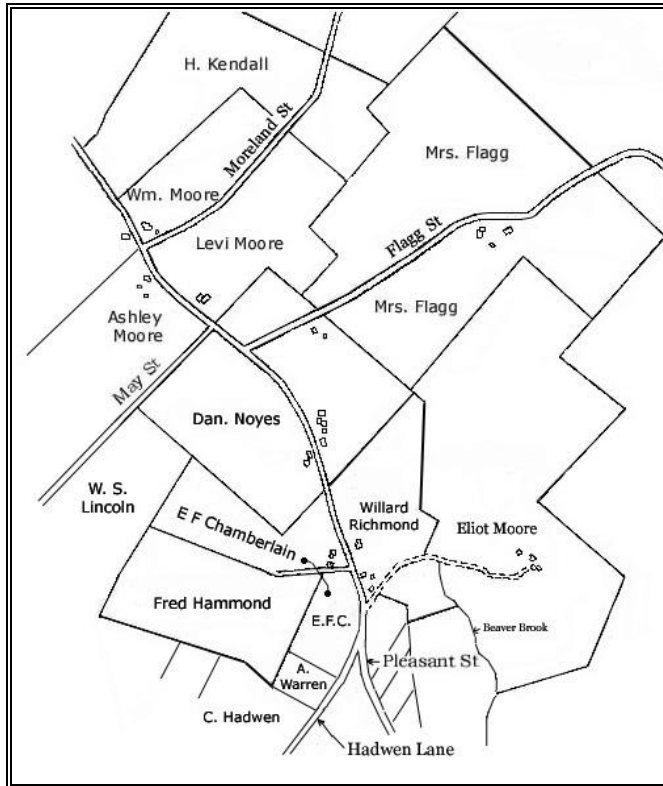
³⁵ Subdivision plan filed by Worcester Real Estate Association: Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 11: 6, Apr-01-1906. Credit for launching this development, however, was given by *Worcester Magazine* some years later to “...the late James H. Howland, who graded the old cow pasture that is now the site of the finest residential sections of the city.” (May 1916, p.104) Howland Terrace was shown as Highland Terrace in the 1906 subdivision plan but the new name was used from the beginning. The plan for the neighborhood also included the small number of vacant lots remaining in that section of June Street. The subdivision plan can be seen in Supplement 2-J.

³⁶ Census of 1880, occupational and land ownership items.

2.6

Approximate property boundaries along Pleasant Street beyond Hadwen Lane, 1886

(by author, from Richards Atlas of 1886)



path leading to the residence of Eliot Moore began by looping around what had once been a pond at the base of the hill, on the innermost part of Willard Richmond's land.³⁷ Its beginning point at Pleasant Street is about where Richmond Avenue now veers off at a similar angle.

On the south side of Pleasant Street lay the Chamberlain and Hammond farms. The Hammond field of nearly 36 acres across the top of the hill, without frontage on Pleasant Street, became a residence farm for the first time in 1896 when Frederick Hammond had a new house constructed on the lower part of the tract, now Morningside Road, above the steep descent to Pleasant Street. It was at this time that the celebrated old barn of the Hammonds, as was described in the *Telegram's* announcement of Lenox, was reconstructed. Access to the Hammond land was by a passageway leading up to the farm, shown in the 1896 Atlas as Selwyn Street. This passage had been assured and formalized in a deeded transaction in 1867 in

which the owner was assigned *"the right to pass and repass at all times, with carts, teams or otherwise over and along a certain passage way leading out of Pleasant Street as now located..."*³⁸ The grantors in that transaction were Ephraim F. and Maria A. Chamberlain, parents of Judge Frederick Chamberlain, and the grantee was John Hammond, Fred's father.

On the north side of Pleasant Street, short of Richmond Avenue, lay the Gates farm, which for many years had served as the local butchery, and beyond Richmond Avenue another older house, still standing, had earlier been the home and shop of soapmaker Cyrus Arnold. Then came the residence of Willard Richmond at 835 Pleasant Street, across from the home of his "in-laws," the Chamberlains, on a parcel of about one and a quarter acres.³⁹ In 1892, Richmond sold the land surrounding his residence

³⁷ The pond is apparent in the 1830 composite historical map prepared for Caleb Wall's *Reminiscences of Worcester*, 1877. The pond was no longer there by 1870, per the Atlas of that year. Moore's house was approximately in the area of Yale Street, which shows on some maps but does not actually exist, near the end of Amherst Street, on the north side before the intersection of Newton Avenue North.

³⁸ Worcester District Registry of Deeds, 759: 357, Feb-19-1867. Most likely the agreement merely formalized a long-standing tradition, or agreement between the parties.

³⁹ The house was located where the former Shaari Torah West now stands, and the small "courtyard" development of Ureco Terrace was built in the 1920s on the remainder of Richmond's homelot of something over 53,000 square feet.

parcel, consisting of approximately thirty acres, to James W. Sullivan and James H. Howland.⁴⁰ They then filed, under Howland's name as developer, the "Richmond Heights" plan,⁴¹ laying out some sixty lots, and establishing Richmond Avenue and Amherst Street along the plain at the base of the hill, and Beeching and Lenox Streets off Pleasant beyond Richmond's house in the elevated portion of the tract.

From the beginning, the uphill section of this development, a fairly level plateau of about twelve acres, with wide panoramic views of the city derived from its position well above the plain below along Richmond Avenue, appeared to be aimed higher on the social scale than was the lower part. It consisted of larger, finer, more expensive homes, and seemed to emerge as a contender for the city's highest tier of buyers, or very nearly its highest. Development proceeded at a measured pace. By 1900, from the census of that year, fewer than a dozen homes were inhabited in the upland area; by 1910 there were thirty houses on Lenox and Beeching Streets, with a dozen or more lots remaining open for development over the next decade or so.⁴² The significance of the Richmond Heights plan for present purposes, especially the upland portion, is that it was making the first "statement" as to what houses were going to look like and how much it was going to cost to buy and build in this section of the growing city.

Figure 2.7, from the Atlas of 1896, shows the interplay of agricultural and residential usage between Richmond Avenue and Tatnuck at that time. Here can be seen property boundaries of the remaining farms, and the several tracts that had been subdivided for development, whether already underway, as in the case of Richmond Heights, or in the planning stage, as was the "Ashmore" subdivision beyond May Street on the land of Ashley Moore.⁴³ The small number of farmers remaining in the area at this time were facing the imminent demise of agriculture on the city's west side. Some might also, of course, have been looking forward to lucrative sales of their hardscrabble farms for real estate development.

The surname Moore remained prominent throughout the area. Besides Ashley Moore, there was the estate of William Moore on one side of Moreland Street and the "Hardscrabble Farm" of Levi Moore on the other; another tract owned by Levi on the east side of May Street (now Asbury and South Flagg); and the Beaver Brook Farm of Elliott Moore, east of Richmond Avenue. Presumably most, if not all, of these Moores were related.

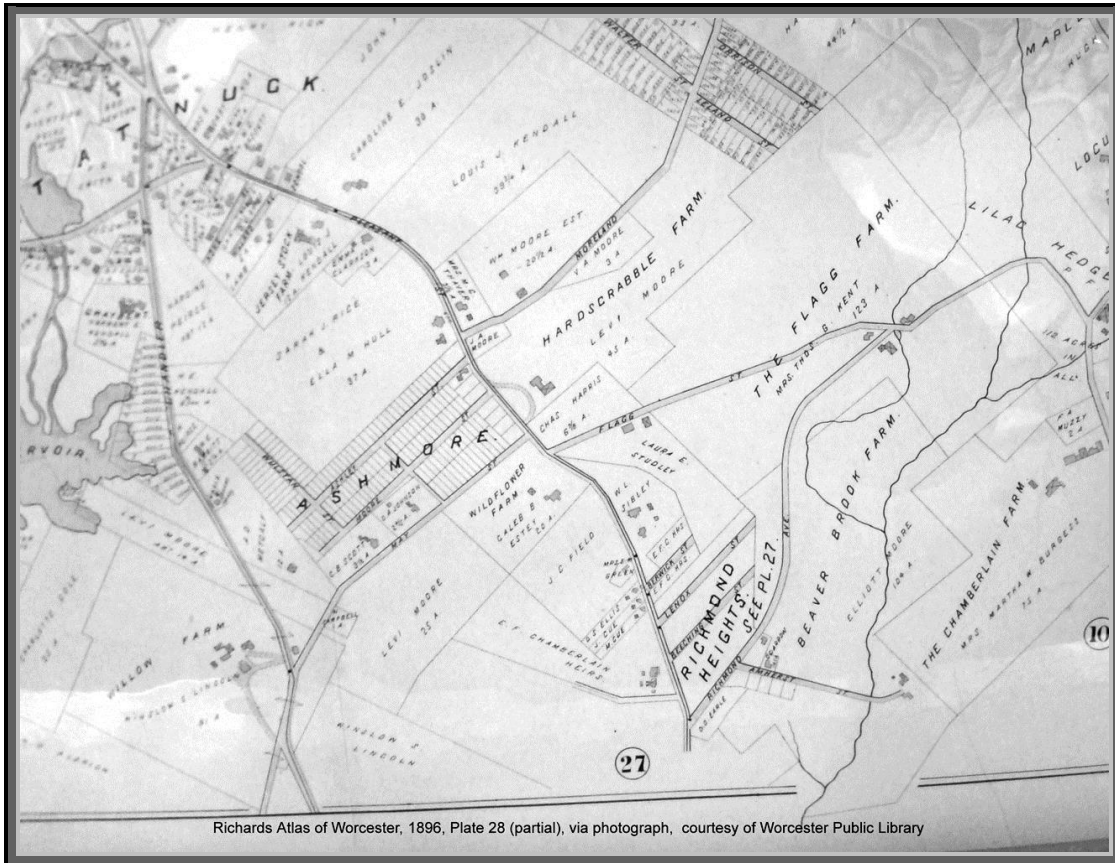
⁴⁰ Worcester District Registry of Deeds 1396:422-425, Nov-23-1892. Richmond may have retained a role in the enterprise, whether actively or as a "silent partner," but the circumstances are not known to us and the matter lies outside the reach of this account.

⁴¹ Plan for Richmond Heights, Worcester District Registry of Deeds 141: 653, May-01-1893, as revised 1521: 653, Dec-01-1896. (Supplement 2-K) The plan as seen here included a number of house lots along Richmond Avenue and the new Amherst Street. The steep hillside between Richmond Avenue and Beeching Street tended to split the area into two sub-neighborhoods. How the areas were marketed, and whether there was any house or property value distinction between the uphill and the downhill areas is unknown. A modification of the plan for the uphill area resulted in Beeching Street turning at its end, connecting to Lenox and then running northwesterly to Flagg Street.

⁴² House Directory, 1910, and Richards' Atlas of Worcester, 1922. The Atlas showed an additional thirteen houses standing on the two streets, bringing it to nearly complete status.

⁴³ With development imminent, some of the area's farmers may already have sold to speculators holding the land for the "right moment," but research to determine who held land at what time and for what purpose lies outside the scope of this endeavor. (The Richmond Heights plan can be seen in Supplement 2-K.)

2.7 Richards Atlas of Worcester, 1896, Plate 28 (partial)



Photograph of the plate, courtesy of Worcester Public Library.
For a larger image of this map see Supplement 2-L.

East of the Beaver Brook Farm lay the “Chamberlain Farm,” as it was labeled in the Atlas, owned by Mrs. Martha W. Burgess. Her first husband, the late George A. Chamberlain., had been the fourth in a line of Chamberlains farming that land dating back to 1742 when his great grandfather, Jacob Chamberlain, came to Worcester from Newton.⁴⁴ The general area of the farm and its surrounding neighbors had been known for many years as the “Chamberlain district,” from the town and later city system of schools in the outlying districts.⁴⁵ There was an ancestral relationship between these Chamberlains and Frederick Chamberlain of Pleasant Street, but the connection was very remote.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ A selectman in 1761, Jacob, as well as two of his sons, was a Loyalist, “numbered among the enemies by the Committee of Correspondence in 1775, and disarmed.” (Nutt, vol. I, p. 72) Nevertheless, he served the “First Church” as a deacon from 1775 to his death in 1790, suggesting that he managed to retain at least some of his personal status in the community despite being loyal to the Crown.

⁴⁵ In the newly-incorporated City’s first annual report, it was noted that there were at that time thirteen “outer districts” of the city’s school system, of which Number 11 was the “Chamberlain District.”

⁴⁶ Information on the Chamberlain descendants of the immigrant William, who came from England to Woburn by about 1648, was provided by James B. Parker of the World Chamberlain Genealogical Society, from an extensive and substantially documented database. Nutt also provides a good summary of the line from William to Deacon Jacob and his descendants in Worcester. Thomas Chamberlain, grandson of Deacon Jacob and father of George who married Matha W. Barnes, was a fourth cousin of Ephraim Forbes Chamberlain, the two having in common a great-great-grandfather, Jacob, born Jan-18-1657/58. See Nutt, vol. I, pp. 72-74.

The geographic proximity of the two families in Worcester appears to have been purely coincidental.

The Stage is Set

By the end of the first decade of the new century, as the O'Connell Real Estate Company was launching its heavy investment in Lenox on the site of the Chamberlain and Hammond farms, the social, economic, and physical character of the area leading out to it from the core of the city had been established. The Newton Square area had emerged as a solidly middle to upper-middle income district serving the city's expanding middle class. The supply, costs, and allowed uses of land for this first phase of suburbanization of Worcester's west side had been carefully controlled by its owners employing relatively new but well established principles and practices of subdivision development. Deed restrictions limited development to residential uses, allowing a mix of single-, two-, and three-family houses, on lots considered large for the time, with building setback minimums, and requirements for owner-occupancy and construction within a year of purchase.

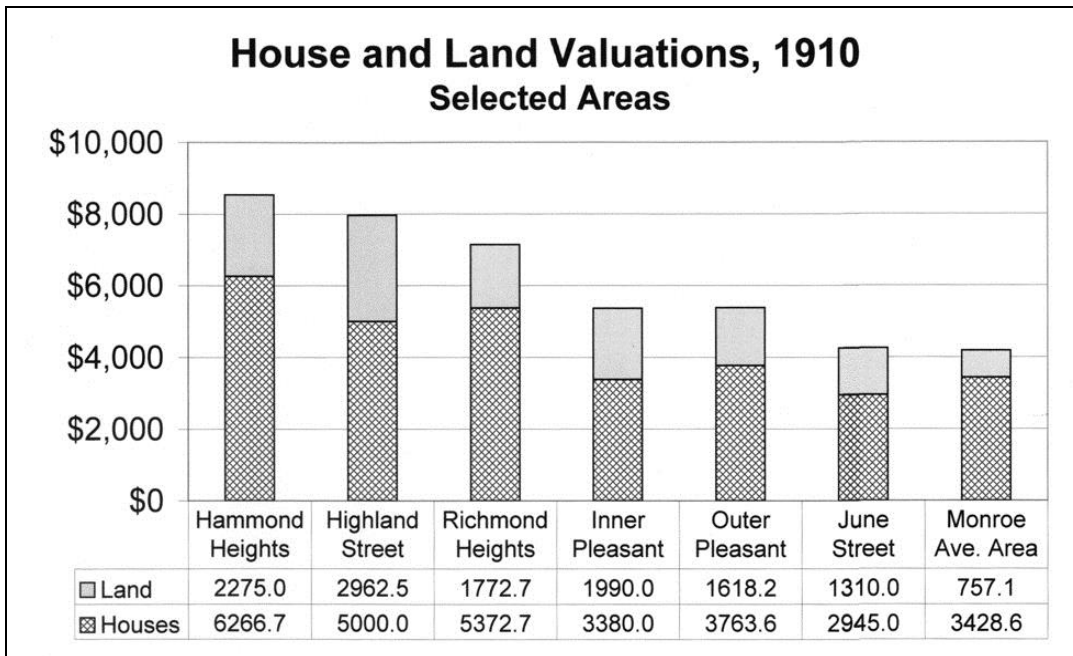
Significant roles had been played by the heirs of John Hammond and by realtor Willard Richmond and his partners, but by far the predominant influence had been that of Colonel John W. Wetherell, whose farm had encompassed the entire Newton Square area, extending out Pleasant Street to Hadwen Lane, bringing it to the eastern boundary of the land about to undergo the transformation process being planned by the O'Connell Real Estate Company for Lenox.

Although far from perfect as an indicator of the actual fair market value of residential properties, the city's assessed valuations provide a "best data available" look at house and land values in the various neighborhoods and street segments of or near the old Wetherell farm. The bar chart in Figure 2.8 (next page) shows such valuations drawn from samples of the properties in each of the principal development areas in 1910, in the format of "stacked columns," showing the assessments on the land and the house (and other buildings and appurtenances) separately, such that the height of each column represents the average total valuation of the sample of properties.⁴⁷

The graphic makes clear that property valuations ran highest in Hammond Heights, followed by Richmond Heights (upland portion only), and the outer part of Highland Street. Properties along Pleasant and June Streets, and in the Monroe Avenue area varied somewhat but averaged barely sixty percent of those of the more expensive areas. On the whole, the Wetherell land had been developed as "moderately pricey" housing for the rising middle class of the city, while Hammond Heights and Richmond Heights had been aimed a notch or two higher up the scale.

⁴⁷ At least ten properties were selected at random from each area, with the exception of the Monroe Avenue area where there were only eight properties occupied and assessed by 1910 (all eight of which were therefore used). All valuation data were taken from the 1910 House Directory. In a small number of cases, sampled properties were rejected because they included very large land parcels which were intended to be subdivided and sold for additional development (as determined by later use), or which amounted to multiple lots from the original plan and were intended to be re-sold.

2.8



It was in this context that the O’Connell Real Estate Company launched its ambitious high-value residence park development, which it called *Lenox*, on the old Chamberlain and Hammond farms, late in 1909. On 65 acres, they planned for as many as 250 house lots. Even if only 200 were to be built upon, that was still a substantial number to be placed on the market at one time. Nothing this large had yet been undertaken in the area, but it must have appeared to the O’Connells that conditions were ripe.

* * *