

New Bedford Architecture: A Walking Tour

Kempton's Corner



Presented by
The New Bedford
Preservation Society, Inc.



5. **Oliver P. Brightman House**

This Walking Tour begins at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 600 County Street. It covers 18 buildings on County Street and 32 houses east of County between Maxfield and Hillman Streets.

This area, now designated as the North Bedford Historic District, was always considered somewhat removed from the heart of the New Bedford of the great whaling fortunes. It consists of lands north of Kempton Street, south of Clasky Park and between County Street and Purchase Street. In the early 1800's, North Bedford was physically separated from the commercial activity of the original town by the holdings of the Kempton family. The upper reaches of the Acushnet River became the shipbuilding center of Old Dartmouth, and the first home owners who came to North Bedford were the craftsmen who served this industry.

Those who built homes in the North Bedford area were likely to be coopers, spar makers, shipwrights or carpenters and to work in the shipbuilding industries on the waterfront north of the Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge. The ship owners and whaling investors of New were more likely to live south of Union Street, the imagined boundary separating the Quaker merchants from the Congregationalist mechanics of North Bedford. Physical evidence of these separating factors can be seen in the maps of the nineteenth century, where it is apparent that neither street names nor their north-south plots were likely to remain the same when crossing this imagined barrier.

In the 1830's, Kempton Street was the only major east-west street in the area north of Bedford Village. It led from the waterfront up the hill and became Smith Mills Road just after it crossed County Street. This important intersection had been part of the original Kempton family holdings since the purchase of Dartmouth from the native Wampanoags in 1652. By the end of the nineteenth century it had been long known as Kempton's Corner.

1. The Catholic population of North Bedford increased dramatically in the mid-nineteenth century. French Canadians came to work in the new cotton mills and the Irish began to arrive in North Bedford as a result of the great famine. **St. Lawrence Church** was designed for the latter group in 1866 by the Irish-born Brooklyn architect Patrick C. Keeley. There are more than thirty Catholic churches in the greater Boston area designed by Keeley. The New Bedford builder was Thomas Murphy. This imposing granite structure is English Gothic in style with a tall tower dominating the surrounding neighborhood. Construction was delayed during the Civil War, and the church was not dedicated until 1870. Bells weighing 12,500 pounds were installed in the tower in 1888, and in 1904 a lighted clock was added.

2. Across Hillman Street is the former city **Fire Station Number 5**, which was originally named for fire chief Zachariah Hillman, a shipwright who was Chief Engineer in 1848 - 1850. The building was dedicated in 1893. Its asymmetrical massing and the use of moulded brick to provide interesting floral and geometric ornament are typical of the Queen Anne style of the late nineteenth century.

3. On the opposite side of County Street are two houses typical of this neighborhood. At 578 County is an early form of Greek Revival built for **Captain Oliver Price** around 1825. The entry, the elliptical window in the

gable, and the orientation of the gable end of the house toward the street are features consistent with the Greek Revival style, though the entry porch may be a later addition. Price was a master mariner who sold the house soon after its construction to Benjamin Price, also a sea captain. The latter Price lived here until he sold the house in 1857 to Ebenezer Hervey, the master of the Sixth Street School. Hervey is given credit for introducing music into the New Bedford public school curriculum when, in 1834, he applied to the School Committee to teach singing to the boys enrolled there. Quaker New Bedford was not ready for this step, and he was denied permission to teach singing during school hours. He was, however, allowed to teach it after hours, and a successful debut at the closing exercises that year ensured continuing instruction in music from that time forward.

4. The house at 584 County Street is an excellent example of a Federal style home of the 1830's. It was built for **Daniel Pease**, a blacksmith. Despite the small modern addition on the south, it is evident from the window alignment that the left side of the house demands a matching set of windows to the right of the doorway. Such half-houses were often built with an eye to future expansion, but, as is the case here, many of these ambitions were never met. The splayed lintels over the windows and the tall impostes above the fluted pilasters which frame the door are all good Federal style features of the years just after the Revolutionary War. However, the wide proportions of the pilasters point to the Greek Revival style as an influence.

5. At 591 County Street on the corner of Maxfield, is an eclectic Victorian residence built in 1869 for **Oliver P. Brightman**, originally of Westport. He was a tinsmith by trade, but after his apprenticeship he became a business partner with his brothers Nathan and Isaiah Wood. The firm of Wood, Brightman and Company dealt in tin, sheet metal and copper and sold stoves for cooking and heating. During the 1850's the company grew as plumbing and steam fitting were added to their interests. Though the business almost failed in the panic of 1857, it recovered sufficiently to enable its owner to build this dramatic residence. Brightman left the company in 1882 at the age of sixty and then gave added attention to a political career which included a second term on the New Bedford Common Council in 1884 and a term in the State Legislature in 1886. His home is deceptively simple in plan, but the many pointed gables at the roof line and Italianate keystoned windows beneath them form only an introduction to the belvedere which rises with an almost oriental flourish from its octagonal base. The stick work in the gable over the entry also adds flavor to the Victorian gathering of styles found here.

6. At 597 County Street is a cubic house with few decorative features. It is topped by a square belvedere with projecting Italianate mouldings above the windows and a handsome bracketed doorway. The curved moulding under the roof line is a seldom-seen feature. This house was first owned by **Alice P. Adams**, who lived here from 1868 until early in the twentieth century. She often rented a part of the house to others, one of whom was Captain Charles H. Adams, originally of Acushnet, who lived here in the 1880's. He was master of the whaler California in 1849.

7. At 603 County Street is the handsome Italian Villa style house built for **Mary and Michael F. McCullough** in 1873. The house was constructed

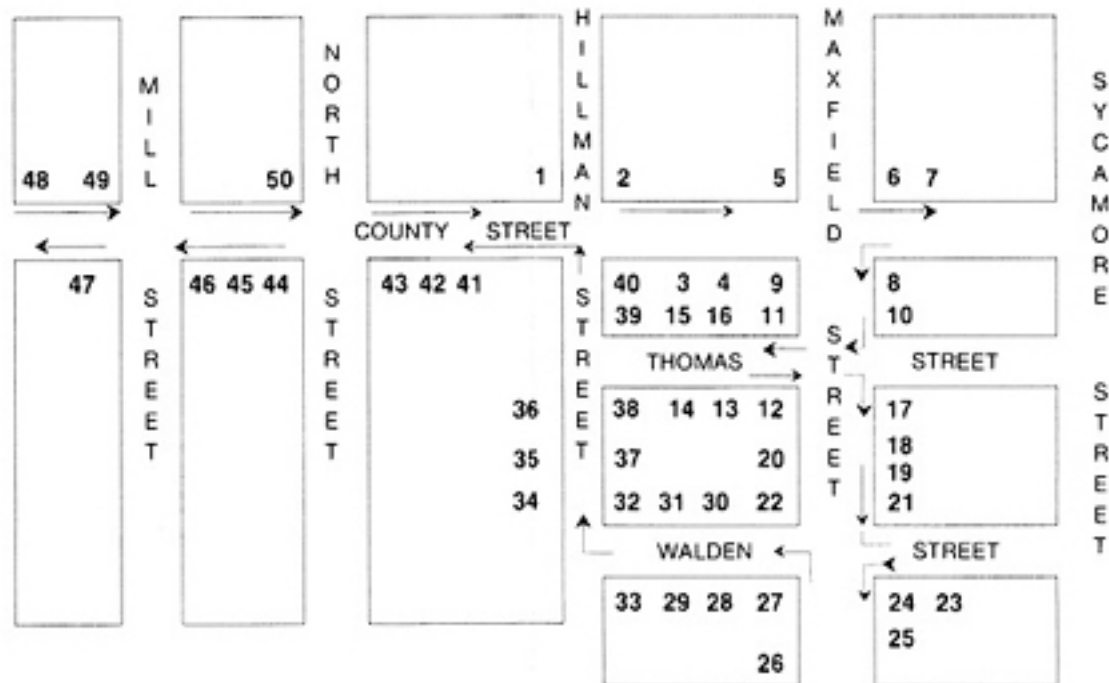
on land from the original Kempton estate purchased by John McCullough, father of Michael, who had it built as a wedding present for his son. Unfortunately, the younger McCullough died of consumption only five years later. This house is of Italianate or Tuscan style, though rendered somewhat formal by the symmetrical placement of two pediments flanking a central tower rather than the picturesque asymmetry usually associated with this style. Italianate houses in New Bedford, however; are generally of the more conservative type. Such homes could be found in pattern books of the day such as A. J. Downing's *Cottage Residences*, first published in 1842 and reissued many times thereafter.



7. Michael F. McCullough House

8. At 596 County Street, on the corner of Maxfield, is the Neo-Georgian style house built in 1916 for **Lucy M. Brightman**, daughter of Nathan Brightman, partner in the sheet metal and plumbing firm of Wood, Brightman and Company. Her uncle, also a partner, lived nearby. She remained here until her death at the age of 75. This is a modest example of the Neo-Georgian house. The square, boxy building topped by a hipped roof with a wide central dormer is a type repeated many times in the city. The elliptical porch and delicate window tracery in the entry are virtually the only reference to eighteenth century Georgian design found here.

9. The home at 174 Maxfield Street on the southeast corner of County was built in 1833 for shipwright **Ellery Records**. It was originally constructed in simple Federal style — five windows across the front topped with typically splayed lintels. The wide fluted pilasters that frame the doorway and the bay over the entry were added in the early years of the twentieth century as indicated by the Neo-Georgian features of traceried windows and a lunette window in the pediment. A probable addition at the same time was the handsome balustraded porch which sweeps around to the east. Ellery Records was only 25 when he moved into this house and lived here until his death in 1898 at age 91.



10. Across the way at 163 Maxfield Street is a house built for **Samuel and Calvin Staples** around 1830. The transitional nature of the house is seen in the five window Federal style facade with its handsome Greek Revival entry framed in Doric pilasters. The squared window lintels are also Greek Revival features. Calvin Staples was a civil engineer and surveyor of roads, while his older brother Samuel listed himself simply as a yeoman (farmer) in the City Directory of 1836. A new porch has been added over the years. The brick foundation which supports both the house and its large ell on the Thomas Street side would seem to indicate that the brothers planned to share this spacious structure from the beginning.

11. On the opposite side of the street, at 164 Maxfield, is the Greek Revival built around 1840 for **Prince L. Taber**. His blacksmith shop was at the foot of Hillman Street. Though he died soon after the house was constructed, his widow, Hannah Clark Taber, lived here for many years after. This is the simplest form of Greek Revival, with the entry on the gable end and a simple return at the corners of the roof line. Wide Doric pilasters flank a door with sidelights supporting a suitably heavy and austere lintel. A modern brick porch replaces the original.

12. Facing Thomas Street at the southeast corner of Maxfield is the house built for ship's caulker **George Clark** soon after he purchased the land from William W. Kempton in 1831. The sweeping stair at the entry leads to a wide doorway under an Italianate hood. These features were doubtless added later in the century to embellish this simple structure, for the splayed lintels over the windows reveal the conservative Federal style origins of the de-

sign. At his death in 1873, Clark willed the house to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who gained from its immediate resale.

13. The land at 62 Thomas Street was passed from William Kempton to his family as a part of the Thomas Kempton homestead to the south (See number 14). It was owned in 1875 by Robert Allan, a cooper, who purchased several houses in the vicinity, apparently for investment purposes. Allen sold the lot in 1881 to **Captain Jabez Perry**, who built this house soon afterward. It is a familiar style for New Bedford, presenting a tall gabled profile decorated with the brackets, window mouldings, bays, and porch detailing of the Italianate style.

14. The Italianate house at 60 Thomas Street may disguise one of New Bedford's oldest dwellings, built long before the buildings which surround it. **Thomas Kempton** (who later lent his name to the street) inherited the land between Elm Street, five blocks to the south, and Sycamore to the north. There is a generally accepted story (recounted in Ellis' History of New Bedford) that Thomas Kempton was at work building on this site when word of the battles at Lexington and Concord reached him. He stopped work immediately, mustered his militiamen, and marched off to the Revolution. This would place the house around 1775. Thomas Kempton was at that time an experienced sea captain and only two years before had received a commission in His Majesty's Army. He rejected this commission at the onset of hostilities and took command of the local Minutemen. He took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill and was made a Lieutenant Colonel in 1776. Ill health soon forced his retirement from the military though only thirty-six

years old. He remained active upon his return to New Bedford, however, commanding the sloop Polly after the war and serving the city as selectman and assessor, even as a teacher in the public schools. He died in 1806 at the age of 66. Ricketson's History describes his house as a south-facing two-story dwelling of the Salt Box shape. This is obviously not what we find today, for the present building is of a much later style. The house remained in the family until purchased by Robert Allan. In 1875 it was sold to Captain William Weeks and physician Dr. John Jennings, neither of whom ever lived here. It may be that either they or Allan are responsible for the twin-bayed Italianate structure found here today.

15. Directly across the street at 59 Thomas Street is a small Greek Revival. A widow, **Susan Almy**, is the first person who can be proven to have lived at this address, though documents indicate there was a building on the lot in 1850. That, however, may have been a stable known to have been built here in 1831. It is possible the house was built by an owner previous to Susan Almy and the present structure is a remodeling of the mid-1800's. The body of the house bears Greek Revival elements such as the carefully made pilasters supporting a return at the corners and a trabeated entry placed off-center. The Italianate round-headed windows of the wall dormers are appropriate to the 1850's.

16. To the right, at 63 Thomas Street, is the house built for shoemaker **Thomas R. Bryant** in 1832. It is a small, single story "Cape" with a tall central gable. The transom window above the door is a good Federal style feature still popular in the 1830's. Other detailing has been masked by modern siding. A subsequent owner of the house was Gilbert Borden, a successful whaling captain of the end of the century.

17. Returning to the corner of Maxfield and Thomas Streets, one finds the home of housewright **David B. Peirce** at 161 Maxfield. This Queen Anne style residence appears to be one of the most recent in this section of the old Kempton lands. Peirce obtained the site after the death of his father in 1888, but records indicate a house already existed here as early as the 1850's. It is likely the building underwent modernization in the 1880's. Recent siding obscures the original finish, but a handsome multi-colored slate roof yet remains to cap the tower on the southeast.

18 – 19. The next three buildings on Maxfield Street represent vernacular houses of Greek Revival form, all two-and-a-half story with gable end to the street. The tall, boxy one at 157 Maxfield, the simplest of the three, was the residence of **David R. Peirce** in 1836. Peirce, like his son, David B., was a carpenter and may have built this house for himself after he purchased the lot from Thomas Kempton in 1831. It is likely he also built the house at 161 Maxfield later owned by his son. The modest Greek Revival at 153 Maxfield was built for merchant **David Briggs** by housewright Cornelius Burgess in 1833.

20. The house opposite at 154 Maxfield is of similar form but has nicely preserved Greek key detailing in the pilasters of the entry. It was built for Master Mariner **Fordyce Dennis Haskell** by housewrights Silas Jones and Wheaton Briggs in 1833. Haskell later sold it to yet another housewright, John F Vinal, in 1848. This was the same year that Vinal built Haskell's

second residence, the well known Octagon style house at the intersection of Union and Cottage Streets.



21. Samuel C. Hunt House

21. The last house on the north side of the block at 147 Maxfield Street is a vernacular Queen Anne. The shingle-clad second floor above a clapboarded first floor, the sunburst detailing of the corners of the porch, and the tall projecting pediment atop a three story bay are all features of this style. This was the home of architect **Samuel C. Hunt**, who purchased the house from Sarah Peirce, widow of David B. Peirce, in 1893. She had purchased it in 1888 from housewright Abner W. Allen, who may have built it. Hunt was the designer of the Bristol County Registry of Deeds as well as the New Bedford Municipal Building. Unfortunately, Hunt never lived to see these buildings completed as he suffered from Bright's Disease and died at home in 1908 at the age of 49.

22. The Federal style house with the five-window facade at 148 Maxfield Street on the southwest corner of Thomas was built for **Captain Russell Maxfield** in 1832. He lived here from the age of 29 until his death at 89. In 1841 another master mariner, Captain Prince Sherman, also lived here. Prince was master of the ship Parker when, in 1842, he was "... taken out of the boat by the line, while fast to a whale, and drowned" according to newspaper accounts. This occurred the year after the twenty-one year old Herman Melville shipped out to the whaling grounds aboard the Fairhaven ship Acushnet. Such a dramatic event no doubt made a strong impression upon the young author. The house Sherman called home has five evenly spaced windows with splayed lintels characteristic of the Federal period. It is on the whole a rather conservative design for the 1830s, though a modern door has replaced what might have been good carpenter's detailing.

23. Next, look to the north along Walden Street and proceed two houses down the street to number 82. This house was built around 1820 for another

Thomas Kempton. This Thomas Kempton was born in Barnstable in 1789 and died in Dartmouth at the age of 88. He was a merchant with an enterprise located on County Street. The house, like many in the neighborhood, marks a transition from Federal to Greek Revival. Its form looks forward, employing the Greek temple profile, while the excellent carpentry at the doorway with its fluted pilasters with triglyph-adorned imposts are Federal style features.

24. The handsome house at the northeast corner of Walden and Maxfield Streets is the Greek Revival built around 1840 as the second residence for **Thomas Durfee**. The wide corner boards, the squared window surrounds, and the wide central entry exemplify Greek Revival taste. The thin sidelights and dental course above the door, however, are of a more delicate Federal style conviction. Durfee was a ship's smith who moved from Fall River in 1831, shortly after the death of his first wife and immediately before marrying Delight Sherman of Dartmouth. A son of his second marriage was Zabeth Sherman Durfee. Zabeth was trained as a blacksmith by his father but later became an iron and steel manufacturer whose improvements in steel led to cheaper methods for its processing.



24. Second Thomas Durfee House

25. The modest Federal style half-house immediately behind at 139 Maxfield Street was built around 1835 as **Thomas Durfee's** first residence. He lived here until 1839. The splayed window lintels and thin pilasters supporting tall imposts reflect good Federal style practice as seen in numerous nearby houses.

26. Immediately across the way at 138 Maxfield Street is a modest one-and-a-half story home which mixes Gothic pointed windows with heavily carved Italianate brackets supporting the hood above the entry. A house existed on this corner as early as 1835, but faced on Walden Street. The 1835 house was built for stone mason **Isaac Francis** and passed to his son upon his death in 1862. The property was sold in 1903 and was subsequently known by its present Maxfield Street number. It seems to be of a style consistent with the time of the occupancy of Isaac Francis, though if it was moved or rebuilt toward the end of the century, the details are not recorded. In 1880 a house on this corner was the home of Alfred Richards, a well known New

Bedford stage line owner and coach driver. When the Taunton-New Bedford Rail Road made his stage line obsolete, Richards continued to carry the mail to Westport and other local towns to the west. His reputation for perseverance was such it was said that if his stage could not get through bad weather, it would be foolhardy for anyone else to try.



25. First Thomas Durfee House

27. Returning to Walden Street, turn left onto Walden and note the two single-story "Capes" at numbers 72 and 70. Number 72 was built around 1830 by cordwainer (leather worker) **Leonard Taber**. It is a good example of what is popularly known as a Cape Cod Cottage. Its small dimensions with centrally located chimney and doorway are typical features. Modern siding may mask other details and the portico is a later addition. Taber purchased the lot in 1830. After 1841 he lists himself in the City Directory as a housewright affiliated with Orville Haskins and Company, a firm of three house builders, and it is possible he was the designer-builder of this house. Seven years prior to this purchase, he married, and he and his wife ultimately raised ten children in this small dwelling.

28. The house on the adjoining lot was purchased in 1838 from Leonard Taber by **Squire Gifford**, a truckman by trade. Gifford's wife bore him 13 children who were all reared in this small home. The very simple, twin-chimneyed house has no entry on the street facade. Its original doorway is still on the south. It is quite likely that it was also built by Leonard Taber before 1836, for Gifford and his family were known to be living here at that time.

29. The site at 68 Walden Street was purchased by **Joshua and Robey T. Snow** from the estate of Squire Gifford in 1880. However, what might have been a barn occupied the property at an earlier date. The style would indicate a building date in the 1840's, at which time either Leonard or Gifford may have constructed it. If the present house was moved to the site by the Snows, the records are lacking. The building is another of the many vernacular house forms with Italianate trim in New Bedford. Modern siding now suppresses some decorative features, most notably the corner pilasters which are indicated by capitols that can still be seen underneath the

roof return. Characteristic of the Italianate style are the pair of round-topped windows in the doorway and projecting lintels over every window.

30. Across the way at 69 Walden Street is another vernacular Greek Revival distinguished by the simple entry with a handsome transom window. It was built in 1832 for **John Bryant**, a farmer who later became the co-owner of a market on County Street.

31 To the south at 65 Walden Street is the well-designed Federal style house built around 1835 for housewright **Obadiah B. Burgess**. He was thirty-one years old at the time and may have built this house for himself, but since others in his family were also housewrights, one suspects he had plenty of help. This is a three-quarter width Federal style house raised high above the street by a tall cellar. It displays splayed lintels over the windows identified with the style and an excellent entry framed with Doric half-columns and a semi-circular light above the door. The tall impost decorated with Doric triglyphs are particularly well-handled details. Modern siding may obscure other authentic historic detailing. Burgess lived here until his early death at the age of 36.

32. The last house on this block is at 61 Walden Street. It was built around 1832 for **Caleb Hathaway**, a farmer. He purchased the land from Obadiah Burgess in 1832, and it is likely that Burgess built the house for him. Though married to Reliance Hathaway in 1822, there is no record of children, and he apparently died childless at the age of 49. The gable end of the house faces the street and the entry has thin sidelights and pilasters of Federal period proportions.

33. Facing south at the corner of Walden and Hillman Streets is the handsome Federal style house built around 1830 for **John Walden**, after whom the adjacent street is named. Carefully placed symmetrical chimneys and a balanced five-window facade focus attention on the carefully designed entry with elaborate fanlights. This form of entry composed of Doric half-columns topped by accurately carved triglyphs from a Doric frieze is also found on the nearby house of Obadiah Burgess (see Number 31). One may speculate that Burgess or other Burgess house carpenters had something to do with its construction. Walden, who owned a cooperage, purchased this property from William W. Kempton in 1830. He lived here until 1843, when he sold the house for what was then the sizable sum of \$2,400.

34. Most of the houses on the south side of Hillman Street were built at roughly the same time and exhibit similar characteristics. The modern siding on number 92 disguises corner pilasters and mouldings of a well proportioned Greek Revival. It was built around 1838 by house carpenter **Cyrus Bartlett**. A year later he sold it to Captain Nathaniel H. Nye, master of the ship Herald. Bartlett was later a school teacher and in 1849 became principal of the Grove Street School.

35. 94 Hillman Street was built in 1852 for the merchant **Nathan Chase**, who soon afterward sold it to Nathaniel Purrington, a blacksmith with a shop on North Front Street. It is a Greek Revival, but the sunken paneling in the corner pilasters have rounded tops, an indication of Italianate influence typical of the mid-century.

36. 100 Hillman Street was built in 1851 for **Stephen Wood**, who soon sold it to his son. Both were butchers who conducted business at Stall Number 5, City Market, at that time in the lower level (then open all around) of the Old City Hall. (This is the building which now houses the New Bedford Free Public Library.) Italianate detailing is present, though the wide pilasters carry widely flared Doric capitols of the Greek Revival.

37. 95 Hillman Street is an excellent example of the transitional Greek Revival form with extensive Italianate detailing in the bracketing over the entry and under the roof line on all sides. It was constructed for **David Isley** (or Isley), "mariner," in 1838 by housewright Obadiah Burgess. The fine carpenter detailing is typical of the high standard of decorative carpentry displayed by Burgess in his other projects in the neighborhood. Isley lived here until his death in 1897.

38. 97 Hillman Street, also built by Obadiah Burgess, is an excellent example of the vernacular Greek Revival structure in New Bedford. It was erected in 1830 soon after Burgess purchased the property; however, he never lived here. Upon his death in 1840 his widow Rebecca resided here for a brief time, but the first permanent resident-owner was whaling captain **Caleb G. Shepherd**. Its wide street facade accommodates a Greek Revival entry of commanding proportions. Doric pilasters frame a wide doorway with sidelights and support a tall architrave with uncomplicated mouldings of the style. However, the splayed window lintels betray a fidelity to Federal style and are elements typical of a building of the early 1830s.



39. Cornelius Burgess House

39. The two similar one and a half story houses at 101 and 105 Hillman Street present excellent examples of the widespread Cape Cod style dwelling. At 101 Hillman is the home of housewright **Cornelius Burgess**, built in 1831. It is likely that he constructed this building himself, though other members of his family, notably his son Obadiah, could have had a hand in it. It is a small, three-quarter width house with a tall, thin Federal entry. The rectangular transom light is framed by impost decorated with triglyphs, a detail seen in other houses associated with the Burgesses. The lintel is supported by thin pilasters, typical of the delicate proportions of the Federal style.

40. The house adjacent at 105 Hillman Street was built in 1833. Its first owner was cordwainer **Caleb Bryant**. Its three-quarter width, gable end chimney placement, and splayed window caps are the same as the house adjacent; only the half-round window above the door sets it apart from its neighbor. The entry is framed by tall, plain impostes atop slightly swelling pilasters. Like the Burgess house entry at number 101, the assemblage here is typical of the Federal style which survived in carpenter's pattern books well into the 19th century.



45. Joseph M. Knowles House

41. Across the street from St Lawrence Church, at 560 County Street, is a variant of the Italianate style popular at mid-century. The twin round-headed windows in the gables of the house reflect the corner pilaster designs and, along with brackets over the porch, give an Italianate flavor. Its first owner was **Charles H. Clark**, a New Bedford pharmacist who married Elizabeth Kempton in 1849. They built it shortly thereafter on Kempton land. In 1853 Clark moved his family to Boston and sold the house to William O. Brownell, a successful ship chandler.

42. The house to the south, number 556 County Street, was built in 1854 for **John P. Knowles** who purchased the lot from Kempton heirs. Knowles was a member of a prominent New Bedford and Boston family. His firm, Thomas Knowles and Company, owned eleven whaling vessels at the time the house was constructed. His introduction to the sea in 1818 at the age of 13 was recounted in local newspapers. Off the coast of Bermuda, as the brig Warren was under full sail, the youthful cabin boy fell from the rigging and was almost lost. His uncle and owner of the ship, Winslow Knowles, dove into the sea in an attempt to rescue him but had to be hauled aboard empty-handed. Eventually, a boat launched to search for the youth passed over the spot where he had submerged and sailors spotted him in time to save him from drowning. This was not the end of the Warren's troubles, for on its return to the city later that year it was wrecked on Skiffs Island shoals off Martha's Vineyard. These misfortunes seemed only to have reinforced Knowles' resolve, however, and he remained in the merchant service, serving four of his sixteen years as a captain of trading vessels. His business

career in New Bedford from the 1840's until his death in 1880 was also quite successful. He served the city as a member of the Council in 1859-60 and was a founder and board member of the Citizens National Bank. His house has strong Italianate features on a Greek Revival form. The corner pilasters with sunken panels and flared capitols support a heavily bracketed roof pediment. The house is fronted by a handsome iron fence of the period which leads the eye to a porch supported by Tower-of-the-Winds Corinthian capitols. The home is capped by a belvedere which commands a wide view of the city.



47. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

43. The house at 552 County was built for **John A. Wood** in 1852. Wood had come to New Bedford as an apprentice housewright but soon became a grocer. He was later a partner with a near neighbor in the firm of Wood and Brownell, Wholesale Grocers. His house is a very conservative Greek Revival with later nineteenth century stick-work in the bracketed porch and a Gothic trefoil in the surmounting balcony.

44. At 550 County Street is the 1843 home built for **Mary Kempton Taber** by her father, Ephraim Kempton, upon her marriage to William G. Taber. It is a transitional house with a Greek Revival entry and an elliptical window in the north gable but with Italianate features in the bay on the south. William Taber was twenty-two at the time and a merchant in the firm which grew to become a major outfitter of whaling ships, Taber, Gordon & Co.

45. The handsome Italianate house at 546 County Street was the residence of **Joseph M. Knowles**, co-owner with his cousins Thomas and John Knowles of one of the city's most successful whaling enterprises. It was built in 1855 when the Italianate style had reached the height of its popularity in the city. The peaks in the roof line in each major face of the building are supported by paired brackets. These and the round-headed windows of the belvedere and street facade and the hood-mouldings at all levels are hallmarks of the style. The Palladian-type window above the entry portico marks an early twentieth century addition which was designed by the New Bedford architect Louis E. Destremps.

46. The house at 542 County Street was built in 1875 for **William Phillips**, originally of Westport. It is a slightly altered version of the Queen Anne style. The roof line is charged with projecting bays and gables and surmounted by a handsome octagonal belvedere. The extensive porch almost surrounds the house and provides a comfortable rambling aspect closely identified with the style. Phillips came to New Bedford at the age of nineteen and became a clerk and bookkeeper for fellow Westporter John Avery Parker. Even after he founded his own ship chandlery and commission business, he remained closely associated with Parker's commercial ventures, acting as the accounting executor for the Parker estate in the 1880's. An early twentieth-century owner of this house was the respected surgeon Dr. Garry de N. Hough who served as Medical Examiner for Bristol County for many years.

47. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at 532 County Street was originally built for the Christian Science community in 1915. It was dedicated as the **First Christian Christ Scientist** in 1916, a major goal of a group founded in New Bedford by a follower of Mary Baker Eddy. This square, rather massive building is surmounted by a hipped roof and projects a Neo-Georgian appearance. Gothic windows and conflicting Classical columns are combined beneath a wide Roman arch, creating a typically eclectic early twentieth century building displaying a selection of historical motifs.

48. Across County Street at number 519 is the Haven Baptist Church, originally designed to house the congregation of the **First Presbyterian Church**. It is classic Neo-Georgian, based upon the earliest form of American church design: a short square brick tower preceding a small basilica. Such a building form might be found in the southern Colonies as early as the mid-seventeenth century but seems slightly out of place in New England. The Presbyterian Society was formed in New Bedford in 1877 and eventually occupied the former Mosher School on this site until it was damaged by fire in 1922. A successful building fund enabled the present structure to be built and dedicated in 1924. It was designed by the Boston architect Thomas B. Syme.



49. Charles H. Adams House

49. The house to the north at 535 County was originally built in 1865 for grocer and provisions dealer Zenas L. Adams. In 1896 his son **Charles H. Adams** employed the New Bedford architect Nathaniel Cannon Smith to enlarge the house into its present form. It presents a wide Shingle style facade to the street, anchored by tall flared gables. The symmetry of the facade and the Classical detailing of the porch are consistent with the revived interest in Classicism at the end of the nineteenth century.



50. Alfred Kempton House

50. The handsome Italianate house at 549 County Street has many claims to historical significance. The spot is the site where three citizens of New Bedford, Abram Russell, Thomas Cook, and Diah Trafford, were killed during the British punitive raid on the city in 1778. They had, according to local lore, initially retreated into the woods above Bedford Village, then returned and attempted to resist the British advance. They were fired upon by soldiers who were moving north toward the head of the river. In the subdivision of the Kempton farm in 1850, the site passed to **Alfred Kempton**, who built this house soon afterward. Alfred Kempton's wealth was largely derived from whaling investments, though he also conducted a coal merchandizing office on Water Street. The house is an excellent example of the Italianate style, with a belvedere rising over a center-gabled roof line supported by paired brackets of the style. A lively carpentered porch with a roof supported by pendent brackets gives a luxurious and comfortable air to the street facade.

This ends the walking tour of Kempton's Corner. A tour of the North Bedford Historic District, the neighborhood known as Acushnet Heights, begins near Clasky Park at the North Baptist Church, 760 County Street.

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Text and photographs by Thomas W. Puryear



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