

Discover Historic NEWTON LOWER FALLS

porch, and staircase window (west face), and is a distinguishing characteristic of the Gothic Revival.

29 The charming Greek Revival cottage at **660 Grove Street** (ca. 1845), as well as several other residences in the neighborhood, were built by local carpenter-builder Vaughn Jones. Wide flat pilasters which frame the corners of the L-shaped cottage, floor-to-ceiling first-story windows, a side-lighted entrance, and the L-shaped veranda with Greek Doric column supports, are important elements in this design.

30 31 The construction of identical Greek Revival residences at **665 and 671 Grove Street** (ca. 1848-1855) is also attributed to Vaughn Jones. The paneled pilasters, pedimented gable ends, floor-to-ceiling first-story windows, side-lighted entrance, and veranda with fluted, Ionic columns represent a full expression of classical ornament.

32 33 Local housewright William B. Lyon was responsible for the construction of this Greek Revival cottage at **666 Grove Street** (ca. 1837-38), as well as the Cape style cottage at **676 Grove Street** (ca. 1842). Both contracts and detailed specifications are recorded at the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds. Francis Davis paid \$1,874 to have the 2 1/2 story cottage at No. 666 constructed. Its pedimented gable end and columned veranda are among the elements that define the Greek Revival character of the house.

The Moulton family occupied the small cottage at No. 676, which cost \$575 to construct. Rufus Moulton was a machinery manufacturer and part owner of a machine shop, Eaton, Moulton and Co. on Washington Street. The enclosed entrance porch with bracketed door hood and the

rear wings are later additions to this Cape style "double" house.

34 The model Renaissance Revival structure at **677 Grove Street** (ca. 1900) has enjoyed a varied history. The small fire station, originally built as Hose House No. 6, was only in operation until 1918 when a more centrally located fire station was constructed on lower Beacon Street to protect both the Lower Falls and the newer development at the western end of Waban. This structure was remodeled by the Newton Public Buildings Department and opened as the Lower Falls Branch Library in 1923. A room in the rear was used for voting, and the second floor was converted into an apartment for the janitor. In 1970 the structure was sold to developers, and today the property is divided into two condominiums.

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David B. Cohen, Mayor



Photos courtesy of the Jackson Homestead



Waterfalls and rapids that could be harnessed for power determined the location of many colonial settlements along the Charles River. On the Newton side at the Lower Falls, the earliest such use dates back to 1704 when John Hubbard and Caleb Church built a dam to generate power for an ironworks. As Newton was an agricultural community, tools and other farm implements were in constant demand. The settlement prospered. By the close of the 18th century, several dam sites had been developed, and the road to the river, later known as Washington Street, was dotted with the residences of ten families.

During the early years of the 19th century, the production of paper emerged as the village's leading industry. By 1816, six paper mills (four of which were on the Newton side of the Charles River) shared the water power of this upper dam, while three others were situated at the lower Washington Street dam. Their burgeoning success firmly established Lower Falls as a thriving industrial village. The population, wholly dependent upon the mills, steadily increased to 405 inhabitants and 33 dwellings in 1823. With stagecoach service to and from Boston three times

a week, the village flourished with taverns, shops, and a church, as well as Newton's first fire company, the Cataract (waterfall) No. 1 to protect its profitable assets.

Residential development came to a near standstill during the closing decades of the 19th century as local industry was unable to compete with the larger papermaking centers in western Massachusetts and Maine. Indeed, change occurred only on a very small scale until after World War II. The construction of Route 128 during the 1950s and the urban renewal programs of the 1970s had devastating effects upon the village's built environment.



Pillar House

Irreplaceable historic landmarks, mill owners' and laborers' houses, a church, and schools were demolished, so that only remnants of this once prosperous mill village remain on Washington Street. This tour explores several side streets where the 19th century architecture survived and constitutes an important physical link with the past. Several early phases of community development are represented, from a Georgian style mansion to local adaptations of late 19th century Victorian styles. None of the sites on the tour are open to the public.

1 Solomon Curtis, a papermaker from Milton, was a part owner of the Jackson Mill and the Elliot Mills during the 1700s. His sons, Allen C. and William Curtis, succeeded him in part ownership of the paper mill in 1819 and acquired full ownership in 1831, when it became known as the Curtis Mills. Fine book paper and newsprint were a specialty of the mill, though bank note paper was also manufactured.

Allen C. Curtis lived in the imposing mansion at **26 Quinobequin Road**, now known as the **Pillar House**. William Lyon, a local housewright, built this high-style Greek Revival mansion late in the summer of 1845 at a cost of \$3,575. Its 2 1/2-story monumental portico is an important feature and transforms the street façade into a Greek temple.



Ware Paper Mill and early Washington Street

The façade is sheathed with flushboards in an attempt to emulate the masonry construction of the Greek originals. The building was converted into a restaurant in the 1950s and was a popular destination for area residents and businessmen for almost fifty years. The restaurant closed in 2001 and the property was sold to the Massachusetts Highway Department. The future of the Pillar House is, at present, uncertain, and plans are under consideration to move the structure to another location.

2 John Ware built the old **Ware Papermill** at **2276 Washington Street** in 1790. This structure is an important landmark as the village's first papermill. Lemuel Crehore, a

prominent figure in the 19th century development of Lower Falls, became a part owner of the Ware Mill in 1825 and acquired full ownership 20 years later. It was owned by the family for three generations and was known as the Crehore Mill. It was sold in 1919, but it continued to produce paper until 1938.

John Ware built his mill of local granite, solid enough to withstand more than a century of heavy industrial use. The building's details, quoins that frame the corners and entrance, lintels over the windows and fascia of the eaves, are made of larger, smoother granite. Renovations for modern use have been done with care and the building's architectural integrity has been preserved. This valuable structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was designated a Newton Landmark Preservation Site in 2000 by the Newton Historical Commission.

A stroll around to the rear of this building is indeed worthwhile. Once composed of several small buildings, the original stone foundations, and the gable end walls of the old paperworks are still visible, having been incorporated into its later expansion. The dam has been known as the Cordingly Dam since the 1860s when the Cordingly brothers shared the waterpower.

3 The William Curtis House at **2530 Washington Street**, constructed during the spring of 1839, is the work of William Lyon. The design illus-

trates a local variation of the Greek Revival, which treats each gable end of the house as a triangular, classical pediment. This house, which is framed with pilasters at each corner, has the appearance of a handsomely proportioned Greek temple. Other important Greek features include entablatures which crown the first story windows, the side-lighted entrance, and the entrance portico with sturdy, fluted Doric columns.

4 Boyden Hall at **2366 Washington Street** (currently the Lower Falls Wine Company) was constructed in the Italianate style during the early 1850s. The hall was designed to accommodate several shops on the street level with a community hall occupying the upper story. The building's architectural features include corner quoins, an entablature at the eaves, and a low, hip roof. The first floor storefront has been redone in a design imitative of the Colonial Revival.

5 The **lower dam** was constructed just south of Pratt's Bridge (now the Washington Street Bridge) in 1788, and rebuilt under the bridge in 1869. Three papermills were built between 1793 and 1818—one on each bank and one on an island (since removed). Joseph Foster acquired two of them and manufactured bookbinder's board. Augustus C. Wiswall, a later owner (ca. 1869) expanded the operation to include wallpaper, wrapping, and colored papers. After his death in 1880, Wiswall's son, Clarence, continued to operate the mills for another 12 years. The mills, which were sold in 1892, burned the following year and were not rebuilt. The land and water power are now part of the Metropolitan District Commission Park System.

6 The Georgian style house at **2354 Washington Street** is the oldest

house in Newton Lower Falls. The 1755 construction date is attributed to the marriage year of its original occupants, Ezra and Sarah (Pratt) Parker. The design was updated as fashion changed, a common practice. Aster Stoddard and his son-in-law William Hoogs, who owned the house in the late 18th century, were both boat builders who would have had the skills to raise the house a story or change a roof. Early records indicate that when the house was given to Reverend Alfred Baurly, Pastor of Saint Mary's Church, for use as a rectory in approximately 1872, it was extensively remodeled.

The layout and construction of the house (originally two stories) follows a typical mid-18th century house plan. It has four rooms to a floor, symmetrically arranged on either side of a central hall. A service wing or kitchen ell was a standard feature; this one was demolished during urban renewal when the house was rotated 90 degrees to front on Concord Street. The three-story house, a popular scheme in seaport towns, became the height of fashion during the 1770s. The attic windows, set close to the eaves, are diminutive in size, indicating the lesser importance of the rooms. The main entrance (after 1822) is Greek Revival. Its deep reveals, set in a recessed portico, are decorated with a Greek key, a motif that would gain popularity in the next decade. The entrance is flanked by full sidelights and has a transom.

7 Episcopal services were first held in Newton in 1811, in a little schoolhouse (since demolished) on Washington Street. Residents of Needham and Weston united with the local group, and the parish was subsequently organized as the first west of Boston. Samuel Brown, a wealthy Boston merchant, donated the land for **St. Mary's Episcopal Church**

and Cemetery. The church was built for \$5,000 in 1813 and today is Newton's oldest church edifice and one of the most architecturally valuable structures in the area. It was enlarged in 1838-39 to accommodate a growing congregation. The entrance vestibule, with its distinctive pointed arches and Gothic style ornament, appears to have been added at that time.

Several papermill owners and mill employees, whose former houses are on this tour, are buried in the well-kept cemetery. The small white building set to the rear was the hearse house.

8 The house at **214 Concord Street**, although altered by synthetic siding and stripped of its bracket ornament, was built around 1810. The bellcast mansard roof and ornate dormers were probably added after 1860 when Augustus C. Wiswall purchased the house. This type of change, deemed "Mansard Madness" by period architectural guides, was popular during the 1860s as it allowed more headroom in the attic. On this house, it adds a full third story. The floor-to-ceiling windows are a noteworthy feature and reflect the house's original Greek Revival character.

9 Asa Kingsbury, a local housewright, appears to have built the house at **198-200 Concord Street** for himself and his brother Daniel between 1828 and 1830. The design is a good illustration of the transition between the Cape and Greek Revival styles. Though the structure's steep, gable roof is carried down to the level of the first story in a typically Cape manner, it is projected out from the façade and shelters a veranda. The veranda is detailed with a classical entablature and pillar supports and exhibits a strong Greek Revival influence. Modern three-part windows replace four smaller six-over-

six sash windows.

10 The construction of the Cape style house at **186 Concord Street**, built between 1829 and 1831, is also attributed to Asa Kingsbury. The roof's steeply pitched slope is a distinguishing feature. A rectangular bay and larger two-over-two sash windows at the corners are later additions to increase the amount of light to the interior space. Edward Warren, an allopathic physician, acquired ownership of this estate (originally ten acres) from Amos Allen in 1841 for \$3,000.

11 12 The two quarter-acre lots at **172 and 178 Concord Street** were part of the old Allen Estate that Hannah and Hobson Swallow purchased around 1882. Both houses, nearly identical in design, were constructed as rental properties between 1889 and 1890. Important stylistic elements such as corner towers and bands of cut shingles that detail the gables were popular Queen Anne themes.

13 Local builder-carpenters William and Allen Jordan built and occupied the Greek Revival residence at **122 Concord Street** (1848-1852). Flat pilasters frame the corners of the structure and support an entablature that is pedimented on the gable ends.

Ms. Allen Jordan's sister was Sarah Fuller, the founder and director of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf in Boston. Dr. Alexander Graham Bell also taught at the school, where, according to local newspaper accounts, he conducted sound and friction experiments with deaf children. He was an occasional boarder at 122 Concord Street, where he continued his experiments in sound transmission that led to the invention of the telephone.

14 The eclectic structure at **108**

Concord Street (ca. 1848-1854) was built for Augustus Fuller, a paper manufacturer from Belfast, Maine. The house, though originally constructed in the Greek Revival style, received a major renovation after its acquisition by St. Mary's Episcopal Church in the early 1870s for use as a rectory. Its original features (somewhat difficult to discern) include a pedimented gable end that projects from the main block and floor-to-ceiling windows. The original columns have been replaced by bracketed, turned posts that are enriched with a jig-sawn valence. Bands of shingles (gable field, dormers), stained glass and bay windows were added during this Queen Anne period renovation.

15 The elaborate Stick style ornamentation on the entrance porch of the house at **91 Cornell Street** (ca. 1870s) is outstanding and rare in this neighborhood. Mechanical scroll saws invented in the middle of the century produced architectural ornament such as the brackets detailing the turned posts and the distinctive balustrade.

16 In 1848, William Hatch bought this small parcel of land at **544 Grove Street** from Lemuel Crehore for \$250. He did not develop it immediately but leased this Greek Revival cottage, then on the opposite side of the street from Crehore, and moved it after 1855. The central emphasis of this design is the gable, which is treated as a classical pediment.

17 William C. Hubbard, a gardener employed by Lemuel Crehore, bought the lot at **554 Grove Street** (ca. 1818) for \$250 the same day as his neighbor. The land had been part of the Starr farm that Crehore subdivided into house lots. Pilasters framing the corners and supporting an entablature at the eaves reveal this to be a modest Greek Revival design. Shed dormers were a later addition to increase light to the attic space.

18 The focal point of the house at **558 Grove Street** (ca. 1907) is the gambrel roof that encompasses more than 50 percent of the total height of the structure. A rich variety of projections and window shapes gives this design an exuberant quality.

19 It is believed that the Italianate style cottage at **564-566 Grove Street** (ca. 1853) was moved to this site between 1855-1874. The mass of the Italianate house is generally more vertical than the earlier Greek Revival. The steeper roof slope of this example, with its gable field unbroken by a horizontal band or pediment, emphasizes its vertical mass. The eaves of this structure project and are embellished with jigsawn corner brackets, a hallmark of the style. As is common with many Lower Falls residences, designs were updated as architectural fashion changed. The L-shaped veranda, with its turned posts and fret-like balustrade, is a Queen Anne element popularized during the 1880s.

20 Local carpenter Peter C. Baker built and occupied the house at **126 Cornell**



Street (ca. 1889). Texture and pattern that add visual interest were important themes during the Queen Anne period. This effect is achieved by using contrasting wall fabric, in this case clapboards with cut shingles. The same is true of the carriage barn to the rear of the property.

21 The sidehall plan was a popular theme during the mid-19th century in Lower Falls and was easily adapted to laborers' cottages and other less expensive designs. The offset entrance of the Greek Revival style house at **135 Cornell Street** (ca. 1853) has full sidelights and is capped by an entablature. Pilasters frame the corners of the structure and support a frieze band on the side elevations. Adam Beck, a well-known local paper machinery manufacturer, was a longtime occupant of this house.

22 In 1837, Cassander S. Flagg, a papermaker, acquired the parcel of land at **581 Grove Street** for \$100 from Lemuel Crehore and Benjamin Neal, who were part owners of the Crehore Papermill at the time. This modest cottage was soon erected. Its offset entrance is framed by a molded surround with corner blocks and is

capped by an entablature, an unusual combination.

23 This small Mansard style cottage at **584 Grove Street** (ca. 1864) was built and occupied by local carpenter-builder Samuel McCutcheon. The bellcast mansard roof with segmental shaped attic windows was a popular combination around the time of the Civil War. Though the wall fabric is masked by synthetic siding, its important features, the entrance and window trim and the slate roof with its scalloped shingles, are intact.

24 This Cape Cod style house at **585 Grove Street** (ca. 1845) was built for John Jones, a local papermaker. The design is straightforward and unadorned, differing little from its early American counterpart built for the Pilgrims. The structure's gable roof has a steep medieval profile. Six-over-six pane sash windows are set close to the eaves and symmetrically arranged around a central entrance. The entrance porch and rear wing were added circa 1880.

There are few sections of Newton with a greater concentration of early houses than along Grove Street between numbers 640 and 676. On each side of the street there is an unbroken row of Victorian houses built over a 20-year span beginning in 1831. Most of them show a Greek Revival influence in their architecture.

25 Isaac Hagar, a local cobbler, acquired his housetot at **640 Grove Street**, valued at \$600 from Lemuel Crehore in 1838. The Hagar family occupied this modest cottage for several decades. Hagar, who was active in state and local affairs, was elected to the State Legislature, served as a Selectman, and was a longtime Chairman of the Board of Assessors.

The gambrel roof increased the

amount of headroom in the attic and was often substituted for a gable roof that characterizes the more traditional Cape Cod adaptations. This roof has been rebuilt, adding a flare to the gambrel's lower slope. Other additions and alterations include the ell (west face) before 1874, rear wing, end chimney (east face) and a new foundation (originally fieldstone).

26 **646 Grove Street**, constructed during the mid-19th century, follows traditional concepts of form and massing. It is a south-facing, 2½-story structure, the main section of which was originally one room deep. A later enlargement, sometime between 1874 and 1886, doubled the width of the house. The house's front room windows are set close together and appear paired, with second-story windows placed near the eaves in an early 19th century arrangement.

27 The Cape Cod style house at **650 Grove Street** (ca. 1837-38), two rooms in width, was originally called a "double house" - that is, a doubling of the traditional one-room width house. The Greek Revival style entrance is a focal point. It is side-lighted, flanked by pilasters and crowned by an entablature.

Francis Davis acquired this parcel together with 660 Grove Street from Lemuel Crehore and Benjamin Neal for \$250 in 1837. The next year, he sold both parcels to his twin brother William, a laborer who cased and finished cardboard at Crehore's Mill.

28 Joe Estes, another local papermaker, acquired the 1/3-acre parcel of land at **656 Grove Street** from Benjamin Neal for \$250 in 1845. This Gothic cottage, a rare style in Lower Falls, was soon built. The central feature is the eye-catching wooden trim or "gingerbread" which is seen on the eaves, veranda, side entrance