



A Bit of History about Hampshire Street

Hampshire Street has played many important roles in Quincy's history. It was the first route cut through the bluffs from the river to the small settlement of buildings around the square; it was also the first road to be graded and the first to be paved. In 1840 the City Market was constructed at Third and Hampshire, to be replaced by the City Hall in 1888. In the meantime, lower Hampshire had become the center of the city's large and prosperous clothing and dry goods district, whose only remaining remnant is the Lesem Block, now operating as a restaurant. On the north side of the square, Quincy's first row of high grade commercial buildings was erected on Hampshire in 1847, where the Washington Theater now stands.

While lower Hampshire was evolving into a business thoroughfare, the other end of the street, particularly east of 12th, was becoming one of the most fashionable avenues in town. Several Italianate houses, complete with belvedere, went up in the 1850s and 1860s. These were followed by a wealth of large houses encompassing a variety of late Victorian and early modern styles. Much of this heritage remains today, enriched by beautiful curbside and lawn plantings and many years of caring maintenance.

