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13 Bowdoin School – 1896, 45 Myrtle St., Edmund March Wheelwright, architect. Georgian Revival School designed by architect of Longfellow Bridge, Harvard Lampoon Building, Pine Street Inn (Bristol St. Fire Station), Jordan Hall, Horticultural Hall. Served as city architect during the 1890s. Third school in this area named for 1780s MA governor. Charles Sumner’s birthplace and preceded by Gridley J.F. Bryant-designed school. Boston Public Schools administration building after 1936. Condo conversion in 1977. *Turn right on to Irving, left on to Revere*

14 Rollins Place – Built in 1843 by contractor John Rollins. Most interesting of North Slope’s dozen or more cul-de-sacs by virtue of faux Greek Revival house at head of this intriguing dead-end way. *Exit Rollins Place, turn left on to Revere and left on to Garden. From Garden turn right on to Phillips.*

15 John P. Coburn House – 1843, 2 Phillips Street. Greek Revival town house designed by Asher Benjamin for African-American clothing store owner who operated a gambling concern in part of this house for white patrons. Some proceeds from gaming said to have been donated to the Twelfth Baptist Church and the abolitionist cause.

16 7 Phillips Street – c. 1890. Early tenement before the design of this building type is locked into a formula (i.e., 3 and 5 Phillips Street with their Renaissance and Georgian Revival elements, galvanized iron cornice, etc.).

17 The Vilna Shul – 1919, 14-18 Phillips St., Max Kalman, architect. The last of the 50-plus synagogues that served Eastern European Jews of the West End/North Slope/Bulfinch Triangle during the period of 1885-1920. Vilna Shul evolved from a landsmanshaft or religious group sharing the common language, customs and history of Vilna, Lithuania. Group worshiped in various apartments, the Twelfth Baptist Church and 27 Anderson St. before moving to this building. Kalman was a lawyer as well as an architect who was responsible for the design of numerous tenements. Total cost of the synagogue was \$20,150. Layout reportedly inspired by the Touro Synagogue in Newport, R.I. Efforts to save the building have been ongoing since the 1980s.

18 24-28 Phillips Street/3 Coburn Court – Hidden house, survivor of original pair. Accessed by once open alley called Coburn Court, now enclosed within

later tenement. Coburn Court was named for the clothing dealer John P. Coburn whose house at No. 4 may have been identical to the surviving house. Tenement numbered 24 to 28 built in 1907 from designs provided by Frederick A. Norcross. Tenement was the home of Eastern European Jews. By 1902, 40,000 Jews lived in Boston. Worked as peddlers, tailors, shopkeepers, real estate speculators, upholsterers and other trades.

19 Phillips School – 1861-1862, Nathaniel J. Bradlee, architect. Rare substantial surviving Italianate school building. Named for abolitionist that was named for Wendell’s father John Phillips, first mayor after Boston’s incorporation as a city in 1822. During mid-20th century this building housed a technical school whose initials I.T.C. rose from a panel that completely covered the main façade’s center pavilion.

20 Lewis Hayden House – 1833, 66 Phillips Street. Born into slavery, escaped to Detroit and later Boston via the Underground Railway, Lewis Hayden was, according to historian Adelaide Cromwell, “the undisputed leader of the Negroe community during Abolition times.” He worked as a clothing store owner but was heavily involved in helping the abolitionist cause and the Underground Railway, helping fugitive slaves flee to Canada. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 legalized the retrieval of slaves by southern masters. A number of these “runaways” found refuge in the back ells and garrets of North Slope residences. Harriet Beecher Stowe visited Hayden and his wife, Harriet, in 1853, meeting with 13 fugitive slaves who were being hidden by the Haydens.

21 Primus Avenue – Set out during the 1840s. Originally called Wilberforce Place after the Wilberforce Colony of free blacks in Canada, named in honor of British anti-slavery advocate William Wilberforce. By the late 19th century this was a dank, blighted alley lined with substandard wooden and brick tenements. During the mid-1920s, Boston Theatre architect Clarence Blackall landscaped this alley and reportedly designed its distinctive gate. The Primus name may reference African-American educator Primus Hall. *From Phillips turn right on to West Cedar.*

22 93 West Cedar St. – Home of poet and New Yorker poetry editor Louise Bogan during the early to mid-1920s. Built around 1840.

Sponsored by The Bostonian Society & WalkBoston

Beacon Hill: North Slope

Explore the section of Beacon Hill bounded by Cambridge, Bowdoin, Myrtle, and Charles streets. Learn about the architectural history of the Hill's 19th-century African-American community, the town houses of Yankee gentry dating from the early 1800s to the Civil War, and the tenements that housed European Jews during the period of 1880 to 1920. Meander along the alleyways and cul de sacs that for decades were considered part of the old West End neighborhood. The tour route will include the residences of abolitionist senator Charles Sumner, meat packer J.P. Squires, African-American civil rights advocates Louis and Harriet Hayden, and bohemian poet and editor Louise Bogan.

Orientation

The tour starts at the first Harrison Gray Otis House. Cross Cambridge Street and ascend Beacon Hill's North Slope via Hancock Street. Hancock was the first "through" street linking Cambridge Street with Beacon Street. Set out over the Hill as early as the 1730s, early names included Turner Street and George Street. It was named Hancock Street in 1788. Possessing both vernacular and high style residences dating from 1805-1875, Hancock Street is a museum of Boston town house development. The construction of town houses on Hancock, Temple and Bowdoin Streets may be seen as a continuation of the tradition of elegant town houses dating from the early 1790s in adjacent Bowdoin Square.

The walk

① **11 to 23 Hancock Street** – Built 1807-1808; Designed in the Federal style by Asher Benjamin, architect (attributed). Similar to house illustrated in Benjamin's American Builder's Companion first published in 1806. Earliest extensive row of town houses in Boston. No. 17 was the home of noted civil engineer and surveyor Stephen P. Fuller and his heirs from the 1820s until the 1880s. Later owners included a Lewis Wharf foreman (1890) and a Faneuil Hall fruit dealer

(early 1900s). From the 1920s to the 1960s it was one of numerous boarding houses in the area.

② **20 & 22 Hancock St.** – Federal style double house built in 1805. No. 20 was the home of Charles Sumner, ardent abolitionist MA Senator who spent three months recovering in this house from a vicious attack by a South Carolina congressman. From 1901 until the mid-1940s, No. 22 was the third residence of the Home for Aged Colored Women. Founded in 1860 to care for elderly African-American freed slaves and local domestics, this organization no longer operates a residence but reportedly continues its outreach to senior citizens.

③ **25 & 27 Hancock St.** – Italianate brownstone double house; built 1860-1865. Early resident of No. 25 was Leopold Morse, who tore down the mid 18th-century Georgian Brattle Square Church (site part of Government Center) in 1871 to accommodate his clothing emporium. By 1880, meat packer extraordinaire John P. Squire owned this residence. His factory in East Cambridge had 400 workers who slaughtered more than 350,000 hogs each year. No. 27 was the residence of late 19th-century North Slope real estate magnate Leonard R. Cutter.

④ **33 to 39 Hancock St.** – Rare Boston examples of marble row houses. Built in 1859 by master builder Jonathan Preston for an upper-middle class clientele of physicians, lawyers and merchants.

⑤ **57 Hancock St.** – Unusual example of town house with Egyptian Revival elements 1811; built c. 1871-1873. Designed by William Washburn, who was an accomplished architect of public buildings including the Revere House Hotel, formerly at Bowdoin Square; Cattle Fair Hotel at Brighton Center (1850s); and the Charlestown City Hall (late 1860s, demolished). Built for Charles Roberts. *Turn right from Hancock on to Myrtle*

⑥ **59 Hancock St. & 4 to 14 Myrtle St.** – Interesting intact streetscape from the first quarter of the 19th century on site of eastern end of Myrtle St. ropewalks (dismantled in 1803-05). During the mid-19th century No. 12-14 contained Boyden's Drug Store. *Turn left from Myrtle on to Joy*

Joy Street was set out in several stages beginning in 1661 (Beacon to Mount Vernon). The middle segment, between Mount Vernon and Myrtle, was called

Clapboard St. in 1735. A year earlier, Joy St. between Myrtle and Cambridge had been Belknap Lane. From the mid-18th century to 1803, rope walks divided the northern and southern segments of the street. By the mid-1850s, the entire street was called Joy St. after the Federal Period apothecary Dr. Joy.

⑦ **36 to 42 Joy Street** – Livery stables dating from the 1840s and 1860s. Significant historical associations with Bohemian Beacon Hill of the 1920s and 1930s. Sections of the North Slope were populated by "youths with artistic temperaments and a penchant for synthetic gin." The Greek Revival stable at No. 36-38 housed the Barn Theatre, while a popular hangout called the Brick Oven Restaurant was next door. The Barn opened in November 1922 with a production of *The Clouds* by Jaroslav Kvapil. Reviews the next day were not kind, i.e., "The only action in the drama was the paint drying in the back drop." *Turn left from Joy on to Smith*

⑧ **Smith Court** – Cul-de-sac formerly called May's Court; named Smith Court c.1846. Focus of Boston's Black community for most of the 19th century. Together with Holmes Alley at western end, Smith Court marks the site of a perpendicular system of rope walks dismantled during the 1790s. Around 1800 African-Americans from the North End settled here. Black population in 1800 was 1,174 out of a total population of 25,000. Typical occupations of Smith Court/Joy Street African Americans from c. 1820 to 1860: waitress, laundress, mariner, barber/hairdresser, waiter.

Abiel Smith School, 46 Joy Street – Significant historical associations with African-American Bostonians' struggle for quality education. 1798—first classes held in Primus Hall's North End residence. By 1808, space is provided for African-American education in the basement of the African Meeting House. White merchant Abiel Smith left \$5,000 to school in 1815. Greek Revival school house built in 1834, dedicated in 1835. School closed in 1855 when Boston schools became integrated. Later uses include city storage facility and Grand Army of the Republic Veterans Lodge.

⑨ **African Meeting House** – 1806, attributed to Asher Benjamin. Oldest Black Church edifice still standing in the U.S. Important symbol of abolitionist movement as well as the Temperance Movement. Although

Massachusetts prohibited slavery in 1783, blacks were segregated within the churches of the white majority. The first minister was the Reverend Thomas Paul of New Hampshire. Fund raising and building conducted by black parishioners. Recycled materials from predecessor church to Old West Church used in the construction. From the 1830s to 1850s, important abolitionist speeches delivered by Liberator editor William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, John Brown and others. Susan Paul, daughter of Thomas Paul, was active in the Temperance Movement here. Building altered in 1855 and adapted for reuse as a synagogue in 1898. Museum of African-American History purchased the building in 1972.

⑩ **William Cooper Nell House – 1799, 3 Smith Court;** rare surviving wooden residence; originally home of two bricklayers. Significant historical associations with first published black historian William Cooper Nell. Lived here as a boarder from 1851 to 1865. Wrote "Service of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812" as well as "The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution." Mid-19th century owner of No. 3 was James Scott, a former fugitive slave and successful clothing store owner.

⑪ **Other Smith Ct. Residences of African-Americans – 5 Smith Court:** George Washington, built c.1815-1828, Federal style wooden house. 7 and 7A and 10 Smith Court: Properties of black real estate speculator Joseph Scarlett, 1853, altered c. 1900. *From Smith turn left on to narrow way call Holmes Alley, turn right on to South Russell*

⑫ **Joseph Ditson House** – 1797, 43 South Russell St. Federal vernacular brick house that is a good candidate for oldest house on the Hill. Built by "paper stainer" Appleton Prentiss, who quickly sold it to trader Joseph Ditson, father of the well-known music publisher Oliver Ditson. His wife Lucy Pierce Ditson's father, Solomon Pierce, was one of the Lexington Green Minutemen. House originally stood on a 40x70 lot. Bakery located within by mid-19th century. *Turn right and walk up to Myrtle, pause in front of Bowdoin School.*

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