

## **Merrill Street**

Laid out in 1857, Merrill Street was likely named in honor of Thomas and William Merrill, merchants on Merrill's Wharf, or Peter Merrill, a Deputy Collector of Customs in Portland.

### ***Architectural Character of the Street***

Merrill Street is eclectic with multiple scales and styles of homes. Dwellings range from one story to three story and include Italianate, Second Empire, and vernacular styles. While the front gable end is the predominate roof form, examples of the mansard, flat, and side gable are also present. Most dwellings are one-and-a-half story and two or three bays wide. Most dwellings rest on a brick foundation. The dwellings are generally set at or near the sidewalk, except for Nos. 19 and 68 Merrill Street. Entrances are generally on the street façade, although there are examples of primary entrances on the side facade. Parking, where provided, is accommodated in narrow driveways to the side of a dwelling. Near the corner of Quebec Street is a former brick commercial building. Commercial structures within the interior of the neighborhood are rare.

**Address:** 65 Merrill Street

**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** 1866-1871

**Surveyed:** 8/17/2018

**Historic Name:** Rodney & Harriet Sparrow House

**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Contributing



## **Introduction**

Likely built after the Great Fire of 1866, the 65 Merrill Street first appears on the 1871 map of Portland. It was occupied for many years by Harriet and Rodney Sparrow, a teamster and later a policeman. The couple moved to Quebec Street around the turn of the century.

For nearly 50 years the dwelling was the residence of the Love family. Willis Love (1849-1933) was born in Virginia. In 1870, at just 20 years old, Willis was living in Alexandria, Virginia and working as a waiter. By 1875 he moved to Portland and worked variously as a painter and waiter while living on Washington Avenue. In 1879 he married his wife Eliza Taylor, a widow who was born in Nova Scotia, and they moved to a rent at 56 Merrill Street on Munjoy Hill. For several years in the 1880s Willis worked on Portland's waterfront as a seaman. The couple had four children, Alice, Harry, Willis Ardon, and James. In 1904 while Willis was working as a janitor at the Elks Club on Congress Street, he and Eliza purchased the house at 65 Merrill Street from the Sparrow family. Willis worked as a janitor and waiter for the Elks for many years, as did his son Willis Ardon. Willis Ardon Love died at just age 31 in 1914 from Typhoid Fever. Their son Harry, an electrician, and his family lived nearby at 49 Merrill Street. After Willis' death in 1933 his widow Eliza and daughter Alice, a seamstress, lived in the house until Alice's death in 1950. Her surviving brothers then sold the house to the DiBiase family.

The front-gabled, one-and-a-half-story dwelling is largely vernacular in style, with Greek Revival influences. At the time of the assessment, the structure was undergoing several alterations, including the addition of dormers, windows, new siding, and a projected gable bay at the building's rear. The dwelling's distinguishing characteristics are an asymmetrical façade with partial covered entry porch, a canted bay window, and wall dormers over the eastern elevation.

The three-by-five-bay dwelling has replacement 1/1 and 2/2 sash windows, some with square drip molds that do not appear to be original. The side-facing partial main entry porch has round supports and square balusters. The single-door main entry is in the first bay and features a sidelight at the left. The bay window on the eastern elevation features wood trim and a bracketed cornice. There are three wall dormer gables over the eastern elevation, and a projecting bay over a secondary entrance with two doors in the last bay.

The dwelling's features eave returns and the roof is metal sheets.

## **Additions and Alterations Since 1924**

Since 1924, 65 Merrill Street has received several alterations. Significant additions include two of the eastern elevation's dormer windows and projecting bay. The façade's single gable window has been removed and replaced with two separate windows. Although the dwelling's updates are not complete, at the time of the assessment the original wide friezes, window crowns, and shutters have been removed. The front porch's second-story balustrade has also been removed, and a lattice foundation has been replaced with vertical panels. Despite its alterations, the house maintains much of its original form and larger architectural features, which speak to its period of construction.

**Address:** 67 Merrill Street  
**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** 1866-1867  
**Surveyed:** 8/17/2018  
**Historic Name:** John M. Stevens House  
**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Contributing



## **Introduction**

Likely built after the Great Fire of 1866, 67 Merrill Street first appears on the 1871 map of Portland. John M. Stevens, a clerk, was the owner in the 1870s and early 1880s.

The one-and-a-half-story, single-family home has Italianate and Greek Revival influences. The property's distinguishing features include wide corner boards and eaves, eave returns, a canted bay window, and a large, bracketed hood over the main entry. The dwelling is two-by-two bays wide, and has recently replaced siding and repainted corner boards, friezes, and trim. The corner boards, main entry surround, and bay window trim all feature similar panel insets, which feel accentuated due to the small scale of the dwelling's façade. The house's wide friezes and corner boards, which support returning eaves, communicate the house's nineteenth-century origins.

The house has an asphalt roof with a single chimney near the interior ridge, and a wall shed dormer over the northern elevation.

## **Additions and Alterations Since 1924**

67 Merrill Street has received multiple iterations of alterations to the exterior since 1924. At the time surveyed, the property was in the midst of receiving several updates, including new or restored windows, doors, siding, and trim. These updates reflect the house's historical character better than many of its previous updates. The new double-door entry and replacement 2/2 windows reflect the 1924 traits of the house. Previously, the house had been updated with a single main entry door and 1/1 windows, and the trim and siding were in poor condition. The house's corner boards, frieze, bay window, and double-door entry with bracketed hood all contribute to its historical character and that of Munjoy Hill.

**Address:** 69 Merrill Street

**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** c. 1902

**Surveyed:** 8/17/2018

**Historic Name:** Ellen Dunn House

**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Contributing



## **Introduction**

In 1856, J.B. Brown purchased the 69 Merrill Street lot, but never developed it. It was sold by the J.B. Brown estate in 1902 to Ellen Dunn, an Irish immigrant and wife of John Dunn, a house carpenter.

69 Merrill Street is a good example of a front-gable home built on one of the narrow lots that typify Munjoy Hill's historic character. The two-and-a-half-story vernacular home has Italianate features, including a bracketed hood over the main entry, and two-story canted bay windows on the façade and side elevation. The house's most stylized element is the main entry, which boasts the bracketed hood, mullion sidelight, and the original door with a single light over panel insets.

The dwelling is two by five bays wide, and has some 2/1 wooden sash windows and many replacement 1/1 vinyl sash windows. The entrance in the first bay is accessed by a set of wooden steps. The bay windows in the second bay of the façade and the eastern elevation have vinyl siding, but reflect the simple styling they had in 1924, with cornices but no paneling, brackets, or other decorative elements. The façade bay window's second-floor cornice extends the width of the façade, creating a pedimented gable.

The asphalt roof features shed dormers over the eastern elevation and western elevations, and has one chimney on the interior eastern slope.

## **Additions and Alterations Since 1924**

The updates 69 Merrill Street has received since 1924 have not drastically altered its appearance. Aside from replacement vinyl siding and the loss of several original windows and a frieze below the gable, the house has retained its historical form and features. Otherwise, the house maintains its historical integrity and serves as an example of the turn-of-the-century development that took place on Munjoy Hill.

**Address:** 70 Merrill Street  
**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** c. 1880  
**Surveyed:** 8/17/2018  
**Historic Name:** Greely's Dairy  
**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Contributing



## **Introduction**

70 Merrill Street is a unique property on Merrill Street and the greater Munjoy Hill neighborhood. Built circa 1880, the property was first used as a dairy. Edward N. Greely (1835-1908), a milk dealer, built his house at the corner of Quebec and Merrill Streets and operated the dairy from the rear of his house. The dairy building was later used as a garage by Alvah York, and later by Hyman Finn. Today, the original uses of the building are reflected in the garage door on Merrill Street and the corner entrance with corner oriel window, above, once used for signage.

The building is five by seven bays wide, and has a flat roof. It boasts several siding materials, including faux brick on the façade, wood clapboards on the side elevations, and cedar shingles above the second-level windows on all visible elevations. The building's replacement 1/1 vinyl sash windows have wooden trim with panel insets, above.

The building's most notable stylistic element is the square oriel bay window over the corner door, which is clad in wooden clapboards and features wooden trim. The shingle roof of the window is sloped and appears to be cut into by the upper corner of the main structure, which contributes to building's highly angular appearance.

The roof features an access door with a shed roof, and a single chimney at the southern corner.

## **Additions and Alterations Since 1924**

The most significant alteration to 70 Merrill Street since 1924 is the addition of brick siding on the façade. The windows, garage door, and main entry door have all been updated. However, the building's original use as a business is still plainly discernable, and its distinctive appearance contributes to the diverse historical architectural fabric of Munjoy Hill.

**Address:** 73 Merrill Street

**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** 1871-1882, store added 1882-1914

**Surveyed:** 8/17/2018

**Historic Name:** House and Store

**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Contributing



## **Introduction**

Built as a two-family home, early occupants of 73 Merrill Street were William Soule, a bookkeeper, and Herbert Emery, a letter carrier. In the 1920s and 1930s it was occupied by Russian immigrants Hyman [Harry] and Bessie Weinstein. Bessie (1875-1940) and Hyman had a small grocery store in the one-story shop at 71 Merrill Street.

73 Merrill Street is a good example of the wood frame, front-gabled houses built on Munjoy Hill's narrow lots in the late nineteenth century. It maintains a vernacular Italianate style like many neighborhood homes, but the additional one-story shop distinguishes the building from its neighbors. The two-and-a-half-story house boasts features that are typical of many Munjoy Hill properties, including an asymmetrical façade, a recessed entry, a bracketed entry hood, eave returns, and friezes below the gable and eaves.

The main structure is three bays wide by nine bays deep. The shop is an additional two bays wide. The house and shop are nestled tightly between neighboring dwellings, so the side elevations are not easily visible. The house has replacement siding, and the majority of the windows are replacement 1/1 vinyl sash, with a few 2/1 wooden sash. The recessed entry in the façade's first bay has panel insets on the interior walls and a hood that is supported by the original pierced brackets. The asphalt roof has one visible chimney on the eastern interior slope.

The shop has a flat roof that supports a roof deck. The façade features a pair of windows, and a single-door entrance on the right.

## **Additions and Alterations Since 1924:**

The most observable alterations to 73 Merrill Street since 1924 are the addition of a roof deck over the shop, and the loss of the wood clapboard siding and corner boards, which were fairly substantial on the one-story shop. Additional changes are the replacement of 2/2 windows and the altered main entry access steps. The shop once featured a large picture display window, rather than a window pair. While these changes slightly diminish the structure's nineteenth-century character, it still retains the larger elements that speak to its era of construction, and contributes to Munjoy Hill's eclectic residential and business history.