



The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.

ADDRESS

617-619 Forest Avenue

ARCHITECT

unknown

DATES

1915

STYLE

19th/20th Century Revival

The building at 617-619 Forest Avenue sits at the corner of Arlington Place, a short dead end residential street, known in the late 19th century as Belmont Place. In 1917, William Oxnard sold the lot with buildings to Mina and Abbie Ambrose. Abbie Ambrose was the widow of Edward Ambrose, a Readfield attorney who died in 1915. Mina their daughter worked as a high school teacher and later was the assistant principal of Cape Elizabeth high School. The family does not appear to have lived in the building, rather using it as an investment property.

The shop front of the three-story building at 617 Forest Avenue was first occupied by the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, a national grocery chain later known as the A&P. The company was founded in 1859 in New York City by George Gilman. In 1915 the company had 1600 stores nationwide. The upper portion of the building was occupied by two five-room apartments that were rented for \$35/month in 1924 .

The building was sold by the Ambroses in 1923 to Joseph Kalil (1886-1959) of Portland. Joseph immigrated to Portland in 1904 from Lebanon, then part of Syria. Joseph and his wife Ida lived upstairs at 617 Forest Avenue and Joseph's dry goods store was in the storefront at 619 Forest Avenue for a few years before he became a travelling salesman. Kalil, was a member of the Masonic Lodge, treasurer of the Men's American Lebanese Club. He attended the nearby Trinity Episcopal Church and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

The shopfront was occupied by C.F. Cook and Sons, a meat and provisions dealer in the 1930s-1950s.

The building is a three story brick structure with a flat roof. The façade features a projecting two-story bay. The storefront, originally a central entrance flanked by two storefront windows is now a recessed side entry with one large store front window with two large panes of glass over a recessed wood panel base. The second floor unit is now leased as office space. While the storefront and upper story entrances have been altered the building retains several character defining details including the bay details, the projecting cornice and modillions, and the unique temple framed window on the Arlington Place façade. These details and the building form and massing contribute to the character of Woodfords Corner and the Forest Avenue corridor.



617-619 Forest Avenue in 1924. Maine Historical Society Image.