

FLASHBACK MAY 1921 100 years ago

Old Somerset and New

Somerset Democrat, May 13, 1921, page 2

Gradually the old landmarks of early Somerville are fading from view, particularly along “Main Street,” where were grouped in the days before the Revolution, a few houses forming the nucleus of the present day county seat of Somerset. Up until recent years the transformation was a gradual one and there are many not of advanced years who can remember the advent of the first big three-story brick building with stores with plate glass windows and “flats” upstairs. During the past decade the change has been kaleidoscopic and but few of the structures which originally graced the old New Jersey Turnpike, where it passed through Somerville, now remain. With arrangements for the permanent paving of the highway and the accompanying plans to widen the thoroughfare and to remove unsightly poles and wires well under way, “old Main street” will soon be a thing of the past.

Within the past two weeks two of the oldest and perhaps the most historic buildings remaining on the street have passed, together with the adjoining lands, into new hands, and are soon to be torn down and replaced with buildings, each of which will cost in the neighborhood of \$150,000, and each to contain a modern theatre, handsome stores and up-to-date offices. The first to be sold was the old Bauer building, near the junction of Main street with Davenport, and this transaction was followed in a few days by the sale of the Vander Veer property on Courthouse Square, directly opposite the courthouse.

Ordinance Introduced for Paved Streets

Somerset Democrat, May 20, 1921, page 1

At the meeting of Somerville Borough Council Monday evening, two ordinances were introduced which, if passed, will provide for the laying of an excellent system of paved streets in the business section of the borough. The paving ordinances provide for the construction of a permanent pavement on Main street from Grove street west to its junction with Somerset street....Bids for the motorization of the remaining units of the Somerville Fire Department, now horse-drawn, were opened. Council heard the first report of the new Mosquito Commission and considered a recommendation of Chief S.B. Van Ness for the establishment of a School of Instruction for the members of the Fire Department.



Photo: Somerville Fire Museum

250 years ago Rolling toward Revolution 1771

The Hunterdon County Freeholders wrote to Assemblymen, “Honest John” Hart, a Hopewell farmer and Sam Tucker, a merchant of Trenton:

Gentlemen: Whereas we understand his Excellency the Governor has adjourned the House Assembly in order to consider further on diverse affairs presented to the House last session... We therefore, without the least Defection in our Zeal for His Majesty or desire to promote Contention between our different branches of the governing body of the Province, yet desirous that our Liberties may be secured to us, do agree and approve the Reasons given to his Excellency for not complying with several Requests* made respecting Incouragment for Augmenting His Majesty’s Troops in the Province and granting supplies for their support... * In 1758, during the French and Indian War, New Jersey’s colonial government built the Old Barracks in Trenton in direct response to petitions from residents who were protesting compulsory quartering of soldiers in their own homes. Unoccupied after the war, the Provincial Assembly resisted proposals from our Royal Governor to again quarter soldiers there.

https://www.njstatelib.org/research_library/new_jersey_resources/highlights/american_revolution/