In the Colonial era, the neighborhoods that make up today’s South End barely existed. The area, then known as Boston Neck, was an isthmus, just 40 yards wide, connecting Boston and Roxbury. But as the city’s population increased in the early 19th century, there was a demand for more land.

On May 3rd, 1834, work began to fill in the South Cove, an ambitious project that took 15 years. The first phase created the land that would become home to the Boston and Worcester Railroad, a predecessor of the Boston and Albany Railroad. The second phase, adjacent to the railroad, would become the New York Streets neighborhood.

**New York Streets**

In 1839, Albany Street was built on the newly created land and named for the terminus of the expanding railroad network. Front Street, which was once at the waters’ edge but now ran through the middle of the neighborhood, was renamed Harrison Avenue in honor of the late president shortly after his death in 1841. In between Albany and Harrison, a series of new streets were built, each named for a city in upstate New York, including Rochester, Oswego, Oneida and Seneca.

**Boston & Albany Railroad**

Construction of the Boston and Worcester railroad line began in August 1832. The following year, efforts began to extend the B&W, as it was known, to the New York border where it would connect with the Hudson and Berkshire Railroad. In 1834, the railroad’s reach was extended still further to Albany. In 1870, after two railroad company mergers, the railroad line was renamed the Boston and Albany.