

10 Cross Street (circa early 1830s)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981 (E. W. Gordon, Consultant)*:



10 Cross Street

2015

Number 10 Cross Street is two-story late Federal wood frame house. Its five bay by two bay main block is clad with wood shingles (originally clapboard), and has a center hall plan. It

stands with its narrow end wall facing Cross Street. The edges of the building are accented by narrow corner boards. It has a gable roof with return eaves. A pair of gable-roofed dormers is at the center of the main façade's roof slope.

Projecting from the center entrance is a small open porch of 20th century origin. In general, the windows are fully enframed and have 6/6 wood sash. Fenestration has been reworked on the main façade's first floor with modern multi-pane bowed Windows.

The house faces a relatively ample tree-shaded yard, bordered by a fence with granite block border and gateposts, and steps to the yard.

Builder: Joseph H Gerrish?

Original owner: Joseph H Gerrish?, William Raymond?

Together with its early 19th century landscape features, 10 Cross Street provides a glimpse of a circa early 1830s late Federal wood frame vernacular homestead. Situated with its narrow end wall gable to Cross Street, its main facade overlooking a relatively ample tree shaded yard with granite block border and gate posts, this circa early 1830s house provides clues as to Breed's Hill's still rural appearance before the area's late 1840s-50s building boom

Together with the masonry Mansard row houses at 5-23 Cross Street, circa 1863, across the street, 10 Cross Street illustrates Charlestown's mid-19th-century transition from a town of primarily wood frame dwellings to a city (Incorporated 1847) of substantial masonry row houses. Architecturally, 10 Cross Street is an unpretentious, somewhat altered example of late

Federal wood frame vernacular housing in Charlestown. The double house at 25 Cross Street is of the same vintage.

This house's lot was part of a tract of upland pasture, which appears labeled "Swift" on the 1818 Peter Tufts map. William Austin also owned a large tract of pasture just to the northeast of the "Swift" lot. Further research is needed to pinpoint number 10's date of construction. A rather murky picture emerges from the deeds for the period of circa late 1820s-early 1830s in relation to the northeast side of Cross Street. A deed of February 24, 1829 indicates that at that time Cross Street was only partially laid out and that William Austin was in no way obligated to "open said Cross Street any further". Cross Street is referred to in a deed dated June 31, 1831 as "a new street running up from High street by the house of Amos Haggett".

The earliest indication of this house's existence occurs in a deed dated April 20, 1835. At that time William Raymond (occupation?) sold this property to Jonas Bennett, a "gentleman" of Charlestown for \$300. Raymond owned several parcels of land along Cross Street during the early 1830s. A deed dated July 14, 1832 between William Raymond (grantee) and Joseph H Gerrish of Carrollton Illinois, a housewright (formerly of Charlestown?), which mentions a dwelling house, may refer to this property (316:426-06).

Later owners included Samuel Dinsmore, a "shipwright", later a "carpenter at Navy Yard," 1872. Dinsmore's heirs lived here until at least 1885. From circa 1890-1934 this house was owned by Annabel M Linscott and J Augustus Linscott, a "cutter".

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Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Charlestown directories-1840s-1870s (further research, checking 1834 directory may be helpful for Joseph H Gerrish and William Raymond)

Middlesex deeds-316:426 (?), 340:123, 482:527

Suffolk deeds-5315:338, 5462:280

*Digitized and edited, without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, and with addition of current photographs. In the case of houses that have been altered since the survey, these photographs may not entirely correspond to the architectural description. If earlier photographs of suitable quality are available, these have been included.

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