

101 (now 104) Old Rutherford Avenue (ca. 1835-6)

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



104 Old Rutherford

2015

Number 101 (now 104) Old Rutherford Avenue is a Greek Revival two-story wood frame house, clad with asbestos shingles. It has a brick foundation. It was originally a side hall plan, clapboard-clad house with a three bay main façade. To the right to the main façade is a major structural edition, a two story flat roofed segment which dates to the early 1900s. The original three bay segment of the main façade culminates in a fascia board and gable roof, while the addition has a flat roof.

The 1911 Atlas indicates that the rear wall of the house is constructed of brick. The house appears U-shaped on late 19th century atlases.

The entrance is recessed and framed by paneled Doric pilasters, which are surmounted by a heavy cornice-headed entablature. The front door is flanked by four pane sidelights and an eight-pane transom. In general the windows have 1/1 wood sash with 6/6/"strips".

Builder: John W. Mullicen and/or John A. Barnicoat 3d

Original owner: John W. Mullican/John A. Barnicoat 2nd

Although its form and fabric have undergone extensive alterations, 104 Old Rutherford's original appearance is clearly readable, even in its present state. Originally a gable roof, side hall plan Greek Revival house of circa 1835-36, this house was altered by the addition of a two-story segment with a flat roof "tacked on" to the northern wall of the original main block. These circa early 1900s alterations at first glance have imparted this house with the air of a late Georgian house with a five bay Main façade/center entrance plan, which was "Greek revivallized" via the reworking of the center entrance with classical enframements. The house's roof configuration however clearly indicates where the original gable roof main block leaves off and much later two-story flat roof addition begins.

Number 104 Old Rutherford Avenue's lot was part of the considerable landholdings of Dr. Abraham Rand Thompson (1781-1866). Along with Forsters and McNeils, Thompson family members were leading land owners of the area bordered by Devens, Lynde, Austin and Main Streets. Dr. Thompson was "one of the best known citizens of the

Commonwealth". He received the degree of Dr. of Medicine from Dartmouth circa early 1800s, practicing with Dr. Josiah Bartlett (for whom Bartlett Street is named) for a time. Dr. Thompson's renown stemmed from his activities in Charlestown Federalist politics. He played a leading role in Edward Everett's first election to Congress and for several years served as a presidential elector. On May 4, 1835 Dr. Abraham R. Thompson sold 104's land to Joseph Thompson. On the same day, Joseph Thompson sold this lot to John W Mullican, Carpenter, of Charlestown, for \$945. Mullican in turn sold 104's land "with all the buildings thereon" to John A. Barnicoat of Charlestown, a master mariner. Middlesex deeds suggest that John W Mullican and/or John A. Barnicoat III, son of the master mariner and housewright by trade, built 101.

John A. Barnicoat III was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1830? -1860. In 1834, he is listed as a "carpenter, his house, Merriam Connecticut". By 1845 he lived at 185 Main Street and in 1852 he lived at 76 Lawrence Street. By 1856 Barnicoat was employed by one of mid-19th century Charlestown's leading contractors-John B. and Charles Wilson (see form on 47, 49 Monument Ave.) John A. Barnicoat is not listed in the 1860 Charlestown directory (although Edward Barnicoat, a carpenter, US Navy Yard, his house 103 Russell Street, is listed in 1860. Further research is needed on John W. Mullican. Number 104 remained under Barnicoat ownership until the 1840s (see Middlesex deed 406:272, 31 August 1841).

Later owners included Roger Sherman McIntosh of Canton, later Dorchester, Massachusetts, a yeoman (1840s-early 60s) and John Mulcahy (1863-circa 1880), a grocer, 27 Lynde Street (house also). By the early 1890s a Mary A. Denvir owned this property.

Rutherford Avenue appears on the 1818 Peter Tufts map, and probably dates to the early 1800s. Rutherford Avenue was at one time named Canal Street at the upper end and Richmond and Bow Streets at the lower end. On May 28, 1878, it received its present name, in honor of Rutherford B Hayes, president of the US whose attorney general was Charles Devens of 31 Union Street, Charlestown

Bibliography: a

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories-1834-74

Middlesex deeds-341: 97, 98, 354:247, 406:272, 437:353, 352, 351 and 340.

571:396, 881:524

“Charlestown citizens past and present”-special edition of *Charlestown enterprise*, 1893

*Digitized and edited without change in content from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, with the 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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