

11, 13 Lexington Street (circa 1842)

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

Numbers 11, 13 Lexington Street was originally a double two and one half story wood frame Greek Revival house. Both halves have side hall plans and three bay main façades. They have paired entrances with outer doors over what were originally open, recessed entrances. Doric pilasters flanking the doors are still intact. Modern shingles have been carried across the centers of the cornice-headed entablatures.

Number 13 was altered by addition of a third floor, a second floor oriel, a deep cornice with paired brackets, and a flat roof, at some point after 1868. Number 11 retains its gable roof.



11 Lexington Street

2015



13 Lexington Street

2015

Original owner: George A Kettel

Numbers 11 and 13 Lexington Street are part of Lexington Street's interesting collection of modestly scaled mid-19th century wood frame vernacular dwellings. They were originally identical two and one half story Greek Revival houses, built circa 1842. At some point in the late 19th century

13 was transformed into a three-story Italianate house with bracketed cornice and a flat roof.

Their lots were #109 and half of #108 on the S M Felton plan of lands belonging to the Bunker Hill Monument Association, dated September 25, 1839. This 115-lot plan is based on an earlier scheme devised by Solomon Willard, architect of the Bunker Hill Monument, in 1834. The largest lots of this development bordered Monument Square. Numbers 11 and 13's lots were among the smaller parcels bordering the side streets off Monument Square (Concord, Monument, and Lexington). The small lots were intended for ownership by artisans and the middle class. House construction around Monument Square was delayed until 1847 due to the extensive grading of the site required for a level lots, but along Concord, Monument, and Lexington Street it began as early as circa 1840. The Bunker Hill Monument was completed in 1842, attracting prospective Charlestown homeowners as well as tourists.

Numbers 11 and 13's lots were sold to Artemis Tirrell, a coal dealer, by Shadrach Varney, a builder and real estate speculator, responsible for Dexter Row, on July 18, 1840 (Middlesex 394:291). Tirrell, in turn, sold these lots, which had no buildings, to George Adams Kettel, a Charlestown merchant, for \$640 on September 6, 1841 (406:479). Buildings are first mentioned in a deed dated October 1, 1842 (419:532) between G A Kettel, grantor, and Albra Wadleigh, a merchant, grantee. The purchase price for the two houses was \$850.

Later owners of 11 include Sally Wentworth, a "single woman", (\$2000 paid to Wadleigh on February 9, 1844), Stephen H Lynde, a clerk, (483:56), Thomas J Temple, a trader (1855), Henry D Austin, a "gentleman", (711:109, May 16, 1855) and

Edward Tilden, a ship carpenter, (1864-circa 1880). From circa 1882 until the early 1900s 11 was owned by a B J Noonan.

Further research is needed to unravel the deed chronology of 13. An Edward Thorndike is listed at 13 Lexington as early as 1852. Thorndike's heirs owned the house as late as the 1890s. In 1901 a Stephen Tobey (?) owned number 13.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1855, 1892 1901, 1911

Charlestown directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-#11-395:389, 406:479, 419:532, 438:287, 483:56, 901:402; #13-921:454

Monument Square Historic District form

*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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