

## 14, 16 Cedar Street (circa 1859)

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



14, 16 Cedar Street

2015

Numbers 14 and 16 Cedar Street are two flat front, red brick, and granite-trimmed Italianate townhouses. They have three stories and granite-faced basements. The main façades have three bays and side hall plans. The buildings culminate in deep wooden cornices with saw cut brackets. They are enclosed by flat roofs. The 1868 Atlas shows contiguous rear brick ells and composition roofs.

The entrances are paired and recessed, with short flights of granite steps. Still intact are late 19th-century double inner entrance doors -an outer door was added to number 14. Above the entry openings are large lintels with tabs.

The windows have simple stone sills and lintels with tabs. Oriel windows are located at the center of the main facades' second floors on thin platforms supported by pendant -ornamented saw cut brackets. The oriels are topped by shallow cornices.

Builder: John F Gilmore, "stonecutter" and/or Westin and Mason "painters and builders"

Original owner: John F Gilmore

Numbers 14 and 16 Cedar are key components of the masonry "wall" of 1850s-60s row houses lining the northwest side of Cedar Street. Together with second-floor oriel windows of 6-12 Cedar, and the undulating bow fronts of 18-22 Cedar, Numbers 14 and 16 form a streetscape remarkable for its rhythmic repetition of projecting forms. The picturesqueness of Cedar Street is heightened by the narrowness of the street, the presence of compatible late 19th century apartments across the street and a charming mansard cottage at 34 High Street, which serves as a southwestern focal point opposite the head of Cedar Street.

Built circa 1859, these houses represent the work of John F Gilman, stonecutter, and possibly Weston and Mason, builders and painters. John F Gilman was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1850 until the early 1870s. Over time, Gilman's place of residence included 7 Second Street (1852), 53 Russell Street (1854), 7 Monument Avenue (1856), 37 High Street (1860), 173 Main Street (1860) And 160 Main Street (1870). For biographical information on Weston and Mason, see form on 2, 4 Mason Court.

Numbers 14 and 16 Cedar Street's lots were part of a large rectangular parcel labeled "Swift" on the 1818 Tufts map of Charlestown. Evidently Cedar Street was laid out circa 18\_\_ along the boundary line separating Swift's property from that of the Union Savings Bank on the southeast. Numbers 14 and 16 Cedar's lots were laid just outside the northwest boundary of the Bunker Hill Monument Association's 115 lot Monument Square tract.

A "plan of Monument Square" dated 1834 shows 14 and 16's land as part of a parcel owned by Nathan Pratt. By the late 1850s, 14 and 16's lots were owned by John Stimpson. He sold 14's land "with the new brick building" to John F Gilman, stonecutter on September 20, 1859. Gilman paid Stimpson \$2500 for the house and land (Gilman evidently purchased 14 and 16 from Stimpson at about the same time). On May 16, 1861, Gilman sold 14 to Carolyn M Sisson, wife of Francis Sisson, for \$5200. The Sissons sold this house to a Frank P Hurd on April 20, 1868 for \$7500.

Number 16's deed chronology raises the possibility that prolific builders and painters Weston and Mason had a hand in this building's construction. On April 30, 1860 Gilman sold 16 to Weston and Mason, "painters and builders" for \$6000. One

month later Westin and Mason sold 16 to Peter Holmes, a cork dealer, on June 9, 1864 for \$6500. Holmes, in turn, sold 16 to Aaron Ward, a weaver, for \$5500 on August 7, 1865. Andrew T Graves purchased this house from Ward on July 28 1866 for \$5500. Aaron (Andrew?) T Graves was a bookseller and publisher, 20 Corn Hill. Later owners of number 16 included Richard F Leonard (1901) and Annie M Leonard (1911).

Late owners of 14 Cedar included George Bachelder (1885), Frank Jones (1890s, 1900) and Nelly F Shaw (1911).

Note: Over time, John F Gilman's places of business were listed as:

Gillman and Goodrich, Stonecutters, Prison Point Wharf (1854).

East Cambridge (1856-1860s)

John F and F L Gilman, Granite cutters and dealers, 49 Medford Street (1870)

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Panoramic view of Charlestown-1848

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-number 14-850:402, 851:251, 1021:468;

number 16-831:202, 406, 931:111, 971:322

\*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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