

2 Wood Street (ca. 1790-1810)

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



2 Wood Street

1980s

Number 2 Wood Street is a boxy, three-story Federal house. It has seven bays on its Wood Street façade and two bays on Main Street, with a later storefront addition with modern "colonial" treatments on the Main Street wall. It is a brick building with seven rows of stretcher breaks for every row of header bricks. It has a granite block basement, which is just above the street grade to the left of the entrance.

It has an off center arched entrance on Wood Street, and The windows are covered over at the first floor on the wood Street side. In general those of the upper floors have 1/1 wood sash. There is later "stepped out" brick corbelling at the cornice. No longer extant is the original low hip roof; the present roof is flat.



2 Wood Street

2016

Original owner; David Wood?

Although considerably altered, this masonry late 18th century/early 19th century Federal house, prominently sited at the northeast corner of Wood and Main streets, manages to convey a sense of its original appearance with its boxy form, planar masonry surfaces, off-center entrance arch with a semicircular fan light, and a narrow end wall gable facing Main Street.

The house acquired a storefront at some point late 18th-early 20th century. The storefront replaced the original, partially below grade basement door, flanked by windows. The house's cornice seems also to have been Victorianized by the addition of deep, "stepped out" brick corbelling. The house's original hip roof is no longer extant.

The house seems to have been originally owned by a David Wood, who owned much of the land between Wood and School Streets during the late 18th-early 19th centuries. An article in the *Charlestown Enterprise* dated November 28, 1896, page 1, sheds light on this house's early history: the reporter noted that "the old brick house at the corner of Wood Street has not changed much. James Bird, a dry goods dealer, lived there many years ago. Also C Sonle Casteel (?), who kept a private school, was a master at the Harvard School and later could be found at the public library at the old City Hall."

During the mid-19th century the house was evidently owned by a Coleman Adams (occupation?). His heirs owned this house during the 1870s and early 1880s. The 1885 Atlas shows this house with a wooden side ell, which is no longer extant, being replaced by a low brick ell.

Perhaps this house's best-known occupant was John G Dearborn, M.D. He was the son of Sally B (Prescott) Dearborn, born in

Meredith, New Hampshire May 27, 1835. His early training was received in private schools and in the Gilford, New Hampshire Academy. He received his M.D. from the University of New York after which he practiced medicine for three years in Gilford, New Hampshire. He settled in Charlestown in 1861 and immediately began a large and lucrative practice. He entered the U.S. Navy in 1864 as assistant surgeon, where he remained until 1866. He was a physician at the state prison from 1869-72, and was a member of many Charlestown social and civic organizations. He was married June 17, 1879 to Susan Edwards of Charlestown. Dr. Dearborn purchased 2 Wood Street from Walter Adams's, etc. on June 19, 1888. He owned the house until at least 1911.

Note: the 1834 Charlestown directory lists James Byrd as conducting a dry goods business at 56 Main Street and living at 1 Wood Street.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Middlesex Deeds-?-Further work needed on Coleman S Adams D

Suffolk deeds 1827:268

The Charlestown Enterprise, November 28, 1896, page 1, "On the north side" (of Main Street)

*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 masonry surfaces available, these have been included.

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