

## 20, 22 Russell Street (circa 1845)

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



20, 22 Russell Street

1981

Numbers 20, 22 Russell Street is a double Greek Revival wood frame cottage. Each half has three bays, and a side hall plan. The house has a gable roof and each half has two pedimented dormers on the main façade's roof slope. The entrances are paired and fully enframed with simple pilasters and heavy entablature. The broad end wall gables have two windows at the attic level.

Builder: John B Caldwell

Original owner: John B Caldwell



20, 22 Russell Street

2016

Built circa 1845, 20, 22 Russell Street is an interesting example of a mid-1840s Greek Revival double cottage. It exemplifies the type of housing built in the Salem Hill area, between Elm and Walker streets, during the building boom of the late 1830s-1840s. Although the present street pattern in this area had been developed by 1818, it was not until the 1840s that house construction was well under way.

This double house is the work of John B Caldwell, a “painter”. On December 24, 1844, Caldwell paid Richard Sullivan Jr of Boston, a merchant, and Francis Cunningham of Milton, a clerk, \$427.50 for two lots (22 and 20 Russell Street) labeled number 8 and number 9 on Alexander Wadsworth’s plan of 6 January 1842 (see Middlesex deed for 52:395). Numbers 20 and 22

Russell Street's lots were part of the extensive Charlestown land holdings of Richard Sullivan Jr and Francis Cunningham.

Caldwell was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1810s until his death in 1848. He is referred to as a "painter"-a term which usually meant carpenter or builder in early-mid 19th century Boston and vicinity. Caldwell is listed in the 1842 Charlestown directory as a painter, working at 23 Main Street, his house at 13 Cordis Street. Caldwell is listed for the last time in 1848 as a painter at 2 Union, house at 21 Cordis. Other examples of Caldwell's work include the wood frame Greek Revival double house at 87-89 School Street, circa 1843-44, and 1-4 Pearl Street, a late Federal/Greek Revival vernacular wood frame row, circa 1846-47.

Caldwell sold this property to Henry T Burr, a lumber dealer, (Middlesex deed for 92:422) for \$2500. This deed refers to "land with the buildings thereon". Burr sold 20 Russell to Bezer Randall, a silver plater, for \$1290.

By 1875 Mrs. Bezer Randall is listed at number 20, and Jesse Stevens' estate owned number 22. Stevens operated a grocery store at 58 Green St.

By the early 1900s, George M Richardson owned number 20 and Steven's heirs owned number 22 Russell Street.

#### Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-74

\*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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