

26-60 Mystic Street (circa 1868-1870)

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



26-36 Mystic Street

2016



36- 42 Mystic Street

2016



44- 60 Mystic Street

2016

Numbers 26-60 Mystic Street is an extensive row of three-story, red brick Italianate houses. Each has a granite basement, a three bay main façade and a side hall plan. Their roofs are flat and they have bracketed cornices. The entrances are recessed, with granite steps. The windows have simple stone sills and lintels, and 1/1 wood sash.

Builder: Hugh Kelly, Peter J Kelly

Original owner: Hugh and Peter Kelly

Architecturally, this group of 18 red brick Italianate row houses is a solid, retardataire approach to 1870 middle-class housing. By 1870 the octagonal front townhouse had begun to surpass in popularity the bow front in Boston neighborhoods such as the South End and Back Bay. This group illustrates the conservatism of Charlestown in the late 19th century building trades, (with the exception of the cornices) with flat fronts, granite basements, simple sills and lintels. Nonetheless, this attractive red brick "wall" of mid-19th-century row houses with its rhythmic progression of cornices down the hillside adds interest to the streetscape.

Built circa 1868-1870, 26-60 Mystic Street is the work of Hugh Kelly, a contractor, and Peter Kelly, a mason. Apparently, the Kellys acquired this row's lots from the city of Charlestown. (See Middlesex deed 1021:339, July 20, 1868.) The Kellys purchased lots 39 to 53 on the Alexander Wadsworth plan of the Alms House estate dated July 20, 1868.

The Kellys sold 34 Mystic Street's lot to Mary Ann Parks, owner of extensive mid-19th century Charlestown real estate, circa 1870. Mary Ann Parks, in turn, sold 34's lot, "with the buildings thereon," to George L Littlefield, a teacher, for \$5600 on May 11, 1871 (1151:87).

Hugh Kelly was active in Charlestown trades from circa 1852 early 1880s. He is first listed in Charlestown directories in 1852 as a laborer at 19 Cook Street; by 1858 he was a contractor at 26 Cook Street; by the late 1860s he lived at 312 Bunker Hill Street, and is listed at 295 Bunker Hill Street in 1880.

Peter J Kelly is first listed in 1866 as a mason in the Navy Yard. By 1868 he was apparently working with Hugh Kelly as a mason and boarding at 312 Bunker Hill Street. Deeds refer to "Hugh Kelly and son"-presumably meaning Peter.

In 1875 this group owners included Hugh Kelly, a painter, who boarded at 74 Tremont Street, - 26; J Q Lowell of Lowell brothers, 4 N. Faneuil Hall Market, cellar (house 421 Main Street)-28; Mary Ann Parks- 30; Samuel Rich, a fish and oysters dealer, 2 Suffolk Market, - 32; George T Littlefield, master of the Prescott School, -34; Mary Ann Parks-38; G McBlack, occupation unlisted-38; David Richards, building movers, -40; Rufus Mason-42; Benjamin Brenttrall-44; H Stevens-46; John Bleadwell, occupation unlisted-48; Hugh Kelly-50, 52, 54; Augusta Dixon, a dressmaker, house and work 60 Pearl Street, and Hugh Kelly-60.

Owners in 1901 include Annie Laydon-26; Cath Dandy-28; Jasper W Stone et al-30; Mary W Rich-32; William T Sadler-34; and Jasper W Stone-36.

*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.

R Dinsmore