

28 Brighton Street (1847)

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



28 Brighton Street

2016

Number 28 Brighton Street is a temple form, two-story Greek Revival house. The main façade has three bays and a side hall plan, dominated by a monumental portico with fluted Ionic columns. There is a porch on the second level of the portico. The columns support a wide entablature and pedimented attic.

A dormer on the south slope is a later addition. The windows have 2/2 wood sash. The house is on a large corner lot.

Builder: James Ritchie

Original owner: Henry Bancroft

Built in 1847, this house is architecturally significant as a rare Boston area example of a Greek Revival house with a monumental Ionic portico. Together with the ionic columned house at the opposite end of the street, at number 6, this house brackets Brighton Street's (mostly altered) collection of mid-19th century wood frame vernacular dwellings.

It is apparently the work of James Ritchie, a Boston builder, who may also have been responsible for the Ionic columned Greek Revival house at 6 Brighton St., circa 1846-47. He was active in the Boston building trades from circa 1835 until his death in East Boston in 1884. In 1840 he worked as a housewright on Haverhill Street, Boston. At that time he lived at 10 Salem Street, and is listed at the same address in 1850. From 1860 to 1884 he lived on Webster Street in East Boston. On September 13, 1845 he purchased a large parcel of land, "situated at Charlestown Neck," from Richard Robins, a counselor at 27 State Street, Boston, living at 95 Mount Vernon Street. This parcel encompassed lots numbered 75- 86 on a plan of Charlestown Neck, 19 August, 1884, together with a strip of lot number 77 (see 482:341. Number 28's land is also described as Lot 75 and 76 in Middlesex deed 971:529).

James Ritchie sold 28's lot on September 28, 1846 for \$2000 to Henry Bancroft of Lynnfield (495:4). The deed does not mention buildings on this property. Presumably the house was built in the spring/summer of 1847. Bancroft owned this house for 20 years but apparently was never an occupant; he was still

a resident of Lynnfield when he sold it to Charles Tenney of Malden, a “gentleman”, on September 11, 1866, for \$3000. Both the Ritchie/Bancroft and Bancroft/Tenney Deeds describe 28 as being located in the Neck Village.

Tenney owned this house until at least the early 1890s. He is listed as an engineer at 394 Washington Street, Boston; his house at 28 Brighton Street" in 1874. By 1912 Patrick Grimes owned the house.

Number 28 Brighton dates from the earliest phase of Brighton /Perkins /Parker Street area’s development. During the mid-1840s the streets were set out over land purchased by Richard Sullivan Sr during the 1810s and 1820s in the section of Charlestown known as Charlestown Neck or Neck Village. Richard Sullivan Sr was the fourth son of Massachusetts governor and Middlesex Canal Company president James Sullivan. He was born in Groton, Massachusetts June 17, 1779. By the early 1800s he was a prominent Boston-based lawyer and real estate speculator, and by 1818 had established a tavern/hotel near what is now Sullivan Square. By 1827 he was a copartner in the Middlesex Canal-associated Boston and Concord Boating Company. Sullivan's tavern catered to the canal trade and was located near the southern terminal of the Middlesex Canal.

Richard Sullivan Sr and Richard Sullivan Jr began selling off their lands circa the early 1840s. Richard Jr was a Boston-based commercial merchant who lived on Mount Vernon Street, Beacon Hill, during the 1840s.

In general, this part of the Charlestown Neck development was due to Boston's population boom of the mid-1840s, a boom

closely tied to waves of immigrants from Ireland and other European countries.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Middlesex deeds

*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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