

285-289 Bunker Hill Street (1850)

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



289-285 Bunker Hill Street

1968

Numbers 285-289 Bunker Hill Street is a trio of flat front Greek Revival townhouses with side hall plans, three bay main façades, and low granite block basements. There are two basement windows for each house. Interestingly, each cornice area is treated differently, with scalloped slope brickwork on 289, dentil-like brick work on 287 and raised narrow brickwork corner on 285. The building has a gable roof and each house has a pair of pedimented dormers.

They have recessed entrances with granite steps and paneled entry walls. Number 289 has its original entrance lintel bar; 285 and 289 have later entrance treatments, and the entrance has been reworked on 285. The windows have simple granite (brownstone?) sills. There are tall windows on the second floor and standard sizes on floors one and three, with 2/2 sash, intact on number 287.



289-285 Bunker Hill Street
Builder: Benjamin Page

2015

Original owner: Benjamin Page, Russell Huntley

Built circa 1850, this trio of stately red brick row houses exhibits characteristics of the Greek Revival style, including low granite block basements, planar brick surfaces, recessed entrances and pedimented dormers. These houses are part of Bunker Hill Street's collection of substantial mid-19th-century row houses.

This group is the work of Charlestown "stonemason" Benjamin Page. He was active in Charlestown from 1845 to circa 1860. He is first listed in the 1845 Charlestown directory as a mason, "house, Bunker Hill". From 1845 to 1858 he is listed as living at "Bunker Hill, near Pearl" or 227 Bunker Hill Street. Page is credited with the double red brick townhouse across the street at 284-256 Bunker Hill Street, circa 1855-1856, and the red brick Greek Revival row at 101-107 Baldwin Street (November 15, 1849).

Benjamin Page, along with Russell Huntley, a trader, Auras Tuttle, and James Tuttle purchased a large parcel of land on Bunker Hill from Robert Robins of New York City, a drug broker. This parcel included lots 201-208 on Perham's "plan of building lots on Bunker Hill, 1837" (see Middlesex deed 551:80). Russell Huntley is not listed in 1840s Charlestown directories. In 1852 his employment is listed as "11 N. market, Boston, house 229 Bunker Hill Street, near Pearl".

On March 9, 1855 Huntley sold 287 to Thomas Marshall, a trader, for \$5000.00 (701:337). From 1855 until at least the mid-1880s 287 was owned by Thomas Marshall's family. Marshall is listed in 1856 as "cashier, Bunker Hill Bank, house 229 Bunker Hill Street." (In 1845 Marshall had been listed at 14 Bow Street.)

In 1860, 285 was owned by Oliver Smith, a "lumber dealer", 140 Commercial Street, Boston. Number 287 was owned by Thomas Marshall, and 289 belonged to Charles W Lewis, a commercial merchant, 99 State Street, Boston. By the 1890s owners included Michael Kelly at 285, Daniel Kelly at 287, and Daniel Kelly (?)Annie Layden (?) at 289.

Bunker Hill Street dates to at least the early 1780s. The north side of the street remained as rocky upland pasture until the late 1840s.

Note- in the mid-19th century 285-289 bunker Hill Street was numbered 227-231.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-874

Middlesex deeds

*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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