

3-5 Mystic Street (1856-1860)

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



5,3 Mystic Street

1981



5, 3 Mystic Street

2016

Numbers 3-5 Mystic Street. is an attractive pair of three-story wood frame Italianate houses. Each has three bays, with a side hall plan. The building has paneled corner boards, a bracketed cornice, and a flat roof. The entrances are recessed and have paneled

pilasters and bracketed door hoods. The front doors are flanked by multi-pane sidelights and transoms.

Builder: David and Sylvester Richards

Original owner: David Richards

This attractive pair of Italianate wood frame row houses was originally covered with clapboards. Its exterior retains many original elements including paneled corner boards and entrance enframements, along with bracketed cornices.

During the early to mid-19th century, 3 and 5's lots were part of the Alms House estate. (The 1834 directory lists the almshouse as being near 12 Elm Street.) These houses are difficult to date via deeds as there are numerous grantee listings for 3 and 5 Mystic Street's original owners, David and Sylvester Richards.

Charlestown directories indicate that David Richards first occupied 5 Mystic Street between 1856 and 1860. In 1856 he is listed as a building mover, at 118 Bartlett Street. Although David Richards is listed in mid-19th century directories as a building mover it is likely that he may have been involved in carpentry as well, and may be responsible for 3 and 5 Mystic Street's construction.

Sylvester Richards, a laborer, lived at 5, 2nd Street. By 1866 David and Sylvester Richards lived at 3 and 5 Mystic Street, and by 1875, the Richardses continued to own 3 and 5 but their home is listed as D and S Richards, building movers, 39 Lexington Street. They owned 3 and 5 Mystic Street until the mid-1890s.

On June 2, 1896, Orlando B Lailor, "police station number 3", paid Sylvester Richards, "of Somerville," "one dollar and other good and valuable considerations" for 3 Mystic Street. The Richards/Lailor deed, (Suffolk 2363:364) mentions that 3's land is lot 5 as shown on the plan of the Alms House estate, Bunker Hill, Charlestown, drawn by Alexander Wadsworth, November 24, 1868". Restrictions on the property involved usage and the number of stories. Only a dwelling house can be erected on this lot and the building could not

be less than two stories in height. Orlando B Lailor owned 3 Mystic Street until at least 1911.

During the early 1900s, a Mary Powers owned number 5. The 1875 atlas indicates that the Bunker Hill Baptist Church was located next door to 1 Mystic Street on what is now the site of 217-225 Bunker Hill Street.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1843, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1870s

Middlesex deeds 2363:364

*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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