

31, 33, and 35 Washington Street (circa 1842-1843)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



31-35 Washington Street

2015

Numbers 31-35 Washington Street is a trio of two story flat front Greek Revival townhouses. They have granite block basements and three bay main façades with side hall plans. Each house has a gable roof with a cornice featuring stepped out brickwork coursing, and a flat roofed dormer. There are brick ells located to the rear, shown as extremely long on the 1868 Sanborn atlas, with small wooden segments at the ends of numbers 31 and 35.

The entrances are recessed, with simple, but substantial granite lintels. The front doors are reached by short flights of granite steps, and the entry walls are faced with brick rather than wood paneling. The front doors are surmounted by three-pane transoms. Number 33's entrance is topped by an oriel window, which rests on a bracketed door hood.

Original owners: John Wesson-numbers 31, 35?
Robert Todd-number 33?

Much of Washington Street's charm is dependent on the presence of numbers 31, 33, and 35 Washington Street. Together with the brick row houses at 27 and 29 Washington, these houses form an attractive wall of early 19th century masonry houses exhibiting arched Federal (27, 29) and square headed Greek Revival entrances.

Architecturally this trio exemplifies solid unpretentious Greek revival flat front Charlestown row housing. Washington Street was developed beginning ca. the first decade of the 19th century, largely by Archibald McNeil. Evidently number 31, 33 and 35's lots were part of the holdings of Benjamin Thompson. They appear on a "plan of S P Fuller, 24 March, 1836. Number 31's deed chronology seems to point to this group's (or at least number 35's) date of construction. On 17 October, 1842 William J Walker of Charlestown, a physician, sold 31's lot (no buildings) to John Wesson of Charlestown, a trader, for \$3634.75. Wesson in turn sold 31's land and buildings to John Gary of Charlestown, a trader, for \$5000 on 9 October 1843- thus 31 was built between October 1842 and October 1843. Wesson and Gary were partners at "Wesson and Gary Grain and Meal. Robert Todd, of Thompson and Company, "lumber, wood, coal" lived at number 33."The Wesson/Gary deed

mentions that "an 8 foot wall shall forever remain as a partition wall to separate the dwelling house hereby conveyed from that of said (Robert) Todd".

During the 1830s-50s Wesson and Gary were partners in their grain and meal business in Charlestown. Gary's heirs owned 31 until 1884-at that time the house was sold to John T Callahan, a "collector, gas company, Thompson Square."

By early 1900s this trio was owned by: John T Callahan (see above)-number 31; Edward Doherty, a laborer, 33; and Patrick Crilley, a laborer, 35.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Middlesex deeds-#31-340:263, 421:48, 432:438

Suffolk deeds-1656: 100

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Boston directories-1874-1900

*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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