

32-36 Pearl Street (circa 1843)

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



32, 34, 36 Pearl Street

1981

Numbers 32-36 Pearl Street is a row of three, one story wood frame late Federal/Greek Revival cottages. They have three bay main facades and side hall plans, and there are two bays at the center of 36's broad Russell Street gable. Numbers 32 and 34 retain their pedimented dormers. Number 36 has a later flat roofed dormer.

Builder: Caleb Pratt

Original owner: Caleb Pratt



32, 34, 36 Pearl Street

2016

Although altered in terms of facing materials, 32, 34 and 36 Pearl Street retain their interesting diminutive scale and form. Built circa 1843, these houses apparently are the work of Charlestown housewright Caleb Pratt. Caleb Pratt was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1832 to 1852. In 1834 he lived at 28 High Street and worked as a carpenter. During the 1840s and 1850s he lived at 7 Franklin Street. He moved to Chelsea in 1853.

Examples of his work include: the double Greek Revival house at 132 High Street, circa 1834, and 31, 33, 35 Walker Street, a row of late Federal/Greek Revival houses which are similar to 32-36 Pearl in terms of scale and massing.

On October 23, 1843 Caleb Pratt sold 36 Pearl to Sardine Stone for \$1100 (see Middlesex the 433:219). Stone is variously listed in 1840s and 50s Charlestown directories as a

"teamster" and a "wagoneer". On December 22, 1874, Stone sold 36 to Esther M Wood of Boston under the condition that "the grantor shall be allowed to reside on said homestead during his natural life... So long as he resides there the grantee shall furnish him with comfortable maintenance and support in sickness and health... The grantee and her family are allowed to live in said homestead and the grantor shall live in the family of said grantee." Esther Wood retained ownership of 36 until circa 1890. By the early 1900s an M E Gleason owned this house.

In 1875, James A Pino(?) Piro (?) owned 32 and James Barnett owned 34. Sardine Stone, Jr is listed as the owner of 36. By the early 1900s an O Hodgkins owned 32 and the heirs of Eliza Gibbs owned 34.

Pearl Street, formerly North Pleasant Street, linked High Street with Bunker Hill Street as early as the 1770s (See maps), evidently, part of Oliver Holden's extensive landholdings during the late 18th/early 19th centuries. Holden's mansion stood on the site of what is now the Holden School. He was "an active and prominent man" between circa 1790-1840. He was a preacher, composer of music and an extensive operator in real estate, and apparently a builder. Holden's land stretched from Main to Bunker Hill Street. In 1805 he sold what is now Sullivan Street and adjoining lots to Richard Sullivan, Sr.

Bibliography:

Maps-1775, 1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1840s-70s

Middlesex deeds-433: 219, 1249:186

A Century of Town Life, a History of Charlestown

Massachusetts, 1775-1887 by J F Hunnewell

*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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