

**34- 40 Bartlett Street (#34-circa 1845, #36/38-1868-69,
#40- ca. 1851)**

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



34 Bartlett Street

2015

Number 34 Bartlett Street is a Greek Revival/Italianate, three story wood frame house. It has a brick basement and a three

bay main façade with clapboards, which are in good condition. The corners of the main façade are accented by paneled Doric pilasters. The building is culminated in a fascia board with a deep cornice, and a flat roof.

A recessed entry has a multi-pane late 19th century transom and Greek Revival entrance enframements with paneled Doric pilasters and a heavy cornice-headed lintel. The windows are simply enframed.



36-38 Bartlett Street

1981



36-38 Bartlett Street

2015

Numbers 36 and 38 Bartlett Street is a two-story double Italianate/Mansard wood frame house. The building has been recently renovated and is in good condition. It has a brick basement and each house has three bays, with a side hall plan with entrances at either end. The building has a Mansard roof and a cornice with saw-cut brackets. There are two flat roofed dormers on the main façade of each house.

Deep-bracketed door hoods support octagonal oriel windows. The windows are simply enframed and have 2/2 wood sash.



40 Bartlett Street

1981



40 Bartlett Street

2015

Number 40 Bartlett Street is a two-story Greek Revival/Italianate wood shingle-clad house with a side hall plan. The front door is flanked by simple pilasters, and a lintel with a bracketed cornice. The windows are simply enframed and have 6/1 wood sash.

Builder: #34-?; #s 36-38, Matthew R Rice (attributed); #40-?
Original owner: #34-John B Goodnow; #s 36-38, Matthew R Rice; #45 Isaac Rowe, Jr

Architecturally, 34, 36-38 and 40 Bartlett Street provide an opportunity to study three distinct mid-19th century wood frame vernacular housing types, which exist, in terms of form and stylistic elements, in virtually every residential section of Charlestown.

Built circa 1845-48, number 34 is an early example of a type of housing which apparently originated in Charlestown: a wood frame, three-story, side hall plan, flat roofed house with a distinct vertical orientation anticipating three decker housing of the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Buildings of 34's type more commonly appear in pairs and rows than as individual freestanding structures. Generally these houses exhibit a hybrid of Greek Revival and Italianate elements (e.g. 22, 24 Trenton Street). At 34 Bartlett, stylistic elements such as entrance enframements and incongruously tall Doric corner boards are purely Greek Revival.

Numbers 36 and 38 date to circa 1868-69. Unlike the substantial Greek Revival double wood framed Charlestown houses of the late 1830s/40s, entrances are not paired but appear at opposite ends of the main façade of this Italianate/Mansard House. The house is similar to 50-52 Green Street, around the corner.

Built circa 1851, 40 Bartlett Street is a straightforward example of modestly scaled wood frame, side hall plan, gable roofed housing, with Greek Revival and Italianate elements, which appear with considerable frequency in Charlestown (e.g. 7 Eden Street).

Charlestown directories indicate that 34 Bartlett was built circa 1845-48. John B Goodenow is first listed at 24 Bartlett

(now number 34) in 1848. (In 1845 he is listed as a baker living at 190 Main Street.) By 1848 he was a "keeper, monument". During the 1870s and 80s he is listed as "janitor, Bunker Hill Monument". Goodnow lived here until at least 1885. Later owners included Martin P O'Dowd, a blacksmith, 1890s, and Bridget A O'Doud, early 20th century.

Charlestown atlases (1868, 1875) and business directories indicate 36-38 Bartlett Street was built circa 1868-69. Its lot is shown as vacant on the 1868 Insurance Atlas with the notable exception of a small one-story structure abutting the north side of number 34, labeled "boots and shoes". Matthew Rice purchased this lot from Francis B and James W Austin, August 20, 1868 for \$2999. (James W Austin is listed as a resident of Honolulu, South Sandwich Islands.) Matthew Rice may have been responsible for 36-38's construction.

By the 1870s John R Rice is listed at 36 Bartlett Street- occupation, "blacksmith, navy yard". John R Rice purchased 36 Bartlett from Matthew Rice on May 6, 1869 for \$5500 (see Middlesex indeed 1061:123). This deed mentions an "8 foot brick wall, which separates the two houses." By 1885, 36 was owned by Edward G Hooper of Edmonds and Hooper, 455 Medford Street. Elizabeth G Hooper is listed at this address until at least 1911.

Number 38 Bartlett has significant historical associations with Matthew R Rice, foreman of the Joiners Department at the Charlestown Navy Yard. He is listed as living at 22 Common Street in 1870 and was living at 38 Bartlett Street by 1875, listed as "surveyor of lumber". Matthew Rice lived

here until at least 1885. It was Rice who repaired the USS Constitution before it occupied "the new dry dock". Matthew Rice was born in Boston's North End on January 14, 1802. He came to Charlestown in 1808 and attended public school in the old schoolhouse on Town Hill. He later attended Mr. Brown's Academy on Cordis Street. In 1817 he was apprenticed to Caleb Pierce, who was a master joiner at the Navy Yard. He was soon appointed foreman, under Mr. Pierce, in that department, and had charge of framing and finishing some of the largest buildings at the station, including the Rope Walk, two "ship houses", three timber sheds, dwelling houses and other buildings. He was also engaged in finishing off a large number of vessels built and repaired at the yard, including the old frigate Constitution, the first vessel occupying the new dry dock. He was employed in the Joiner Department for 19 years. In April 1836 he was appointed Inspector of Timber, serving the government in that capacity for 18 years. Matthew Rice was appointed master builder of the Charlestown Bridge circa 1854, served in the City Council of Charlestown, and was on the Board of Assessors. All told, he was employed in public works for 50 years. He died December 2, 1888 at age 86. See *Charlestown Enterprise/Charlestown News* December 8, 1888, page 1 for a detailed look at Matthew Rice's career.

Number 38 was owned by Urana M Rice until at least 1911.

Middlesex deeds point to a construction date of circa 1851 for 40 Bartlett Street. On October 1, 1850 Benjamin Parker of Charlestown, yeoman, was paid \$600 by Isaac Rowe Jr, engineer, for 40s land, with no buildings. (Middlesex deeds 561:90 and 931:473). Number 40 was owned by the Rowe family until at least 1885. By 1892, John A Duddy, Health

Inspector, 12 Beacon Street, owned this property. He lived here until at least 1911.

In terms of community development, numbers 34 and 40 Bartlett Street are survivors from the late 1840s-50s building boom. House construction activity transformed the once barren pastures of the northeast slope of Bunker Hill and Breeds Hill. This building boom was precipitated in part by immigration pressures, particularly Irish, within the Boston area and more specifically, in Charlestown, and by the expansion of the Charlestown Navy Yard and local industries.

Numbers 36 and 38 Bartlett Street is a product of post-Civil War Charlestown prosperity, the period bracketed by the close of the Civil War and the panic or depression of 1873.

Bibliography:

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

Charlestown/Boston business directories-1834-1874, 1875-1911

Charlestown Enterprise/Charlestown News, December 8, 1888, page 1 "the late Matthew Rice"

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.

R. Dinsmore

