

## **47, 49 Monument Avenue (1854-55)**

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

Numbers 47 and 49 Monument Avenue are flat front masonry row houses with three bay main façades and granite basements. Both were originally Italianate and similar to numbers 15-45 Monument Avenue. Number 49 is now Italianate/Mansard by virtue of a post-1865 Mansard roof addition.



47 Monument Avenue 2015



49 Monument Avenue 2015

Number 47 has a shallow brickwork corbel table with dentils. Number 49 has an identical cornice table but with a steep sided mansard roof, with mostly intact slate shingles. A pair of dormers on 49 is capped by segmental hoods. Both houses have side hall plans.

Four granite steps lead to recessed entrances. The front doors are flanked by multi-pane sidelights and surmounted by three pane transoms. There are heavy stone lintels, with tabs, above

the entrances. The windows have a simple brownstone sills and lintels. Number 47 has 6/6 wood sash; number 49 has 1/1. Above 49's entrance is a paneled wooden oriel window with a dentilated cornice.

Builder: John B Wilson and Charles Wilson

Original owner: number 49-John D Wilson; number 47-Charles Wilson

Numbers 47 and 49 Monument Avenue are key components of the "wall" of 19th century masonry row houses bordering the east side of Monument Avenue. These houses were built circa 1854-55, as part of a multi-lot development that included 15-45 Monument Avenue. Numbers 47 and 49 are separated from 15-45 by an narrow opening between 45 and 47; 49 and 47 Monument Avenue are also separated visually by 49's mansard roof. Architecturally, 47 and 49 provide evidence of how Italianate masonry houses were often "updated" by it the addition of a mansard roof.

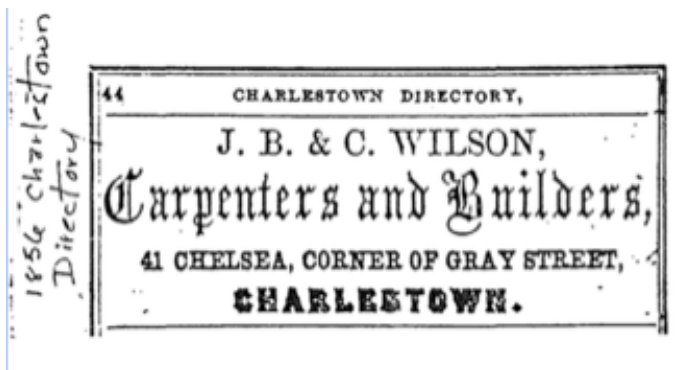
Number 47 and 49's lots were originally part of lands belonging to Isaac Kendall (see form on 44, 46; 48, 50 Monument Avenue for early development history of Monument Avenue). During the early 1850s 47 and 49's land was part of Arnold W Taylor's 19-lot development. (See Doane plan of Taylor's land dated August 18, 1853.) Numbers 47 and 49 Monument Avenue occupy lots 17, 18, 19 on the Doane plan.

Numbers 47 and 49 Monument Avenue have significant historical associations with important Charlestown 19th century housewrights John B Wilson and Charles Wilson. On November 25, 1853 Arnold W Taylor sold these lots to Charles Wilson for \$2441.00. Presumably 47 and 49 were built circa

1854-55. For many years they housed John B Wilson, at 49, and Charles Wilson, at 47, until Charles's death in 1860.

John B Wilson enjoyed a long and highly successful career in Charlestown building trades-being active from the early 1830s to early 1900s. He worked in partnership with his brother Charles until Charles' death in 1860.

John B Wilson was born in Charlestown July 17, 1817. He entered the Carpenters trade at the age of 16. For a few years he worked as a journeyman, before entering into partnership with his brother. For many years John B Wilson's place of business was 43 Chelsea Street. In 1845 the Wilsons built the predecessor school to the present Bunker Hill School on Baldwin and Bunker Hill Streets. In 1842 they were boarding at 6 Putnam Street. By the early 1850s John B Wilson lived on Winthrop Street, while Charles Wilson continued to reside on Putnam Street. From the late 1850s to early 1900s John Wilson lived at 49 Monument Avenue. Mr. Wilson was a member of the Charlestown Common Counsel and Board of Aldermen, serving two years in each branch, and it was a member of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association.



The Wilson brothers are credited with a number of masonry Italianate row houses in Charlestown, including numbers 1-7 Cordis, 15-45 Monument Avenue and 28-34 Chestnut Street. A

late example of John B Wilson's work is the Queen Anne multifamily wood frame house at 18, 20 Lawrence Street.

By 1911 owners of 47 and 49 Monument Avenue were Mary McCarthy and Catherine A Boyle, respectively.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown and directories-1834-1874

Boston directories-post 1875

Middlesex deeds-611: 418, 661:265,

Suffolk deeds-1672: 381

*Charlestown enterprise*-special edition, 50th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill-1893, "write-up on" on Charles B Wilson

\*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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