

## 56 ½ (1975), 58 (ca. 1854) Monument Avenue

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



56 ½, 58 Monument Ave.

2015

Number 58 Monument Ave. is a three story masonry townhouse with a flat front, three bay main façade, and a granite-faced basement. The building has a shallow dentillated corbel table and a flat roof. It has a side hall plan and a recessed entrance with granite stairs leading to double front doors. A heavy-bracketed door hood supports an oriel with a dentillated cornice.

The windows have simple stone sills and lintels and 1/1 wood sash.

Number 56 ½ is a circa 1975, compatible infill house. The building has treatments identical to number 58, except that the main façade is narrow, with one bay. Its narrow lot was originally a passageway. It has three stories and a granite basement, a shallow dentillated cornice table, and a flat roof. Granite steps lead to a recessed front door topped by a transom. A bracketed door hood supports an oriel window.

Builder: #58: Robert R Wiley (?), John B and Charles Wilson (?), attributed

Original owner: Robert R Wiley

Number 58 Monument Avenue dates to the earliest phase of Monument Avenue's development. Middlesex deeds indicate that Charlestown builder Robert R Wiley probably built number 58. On the other hand number 58 is similar to the circa 1854-55 townhouses at 15-45 Monument Avenue, built by John B Wilson and Charles Wilson. (For further information on Robert R Wiley, see form on 59 Warren Street, and for further information on the Wilsons, see form on 47, 49 Monument Avenue.)

In 1854 Robert R Wiley purchased 58's lot from Betsey Gage, a "single woman", for \$853.50. This deed describes 56 ½'s lot as a "strip next adjacent the avenue which remains from my other land ("my" meaning Betsey Gage)." Robert R Wiley owned but never occupied number 58. On January 18, 1859 Wiley sold 58 to J Oaks Bradbury of Charlestown, trader, for \$5200. Bradbury in turn sold it to John W Damon of Charlestown, merchant, for \$4500 on September? 1861. In 1860, Damon lived at 6 Dexter Row. By 1868 his widow is listed at 43 Monument Square. Damon's heirs owned number 58 until at least the mid-1880s.

By 1892 an Ellen Griffin owned this house. During the early 1900s an Elizabeth Griffin owned this property.

Number 56 ½ Monument Avenue is a very recent addition to this thoroughfare's collection of attractive mid-19th-century row houses. It was built circa 1975 over what had been a narrow passageway between numbers 56 and 58 Monument Avenue. Number 56 ½ is a highly compatible addition to Monument Avenue and is essentially a narrower version of number 58.

#### Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories-1850s, 60s

Middlesex deeds-348:471, 472; 671:267; 801:421; 861:73

\*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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