

58, 60 Russell Street (circa 1837)

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



58, 60 Russell Street

1981

Numbers 58, 60 Russell Street is a two-story double Greek Revival wood frame house. Each half has a three bay main façade with a side hall plan, and the walls are covered with wood shingles. To the rear, the basement is below the grade of Russell Street. The building has a gable roof and a simple molded cornice. There is a center brick chimney flanked by pedimented dormers.

The entrances have a simple pilasters and entablatures. The windows are simply enframed and have 2/2 and 2/1 wood sash. The sidewall is devoid of windows except at the attic level.



58, 60 Russell Street

2016

Builder: Cyrus Cobb

Original owner: James Emery

Architecturally, numbers 58 and 60 Russell Street exemplify the type of housing built in the Salem Hill sub-area in the late 1830s and 1840s. It is a solid example of a Greek Revival wood frame vernacular double house.

On January 14 1837, Cyrus Cobb, a painter, sold 58 and 60 Russell Street's lot to James Emery, a blacksmith, for \$180.67. The Cobb/Emery deed (Middlesex 359:297) does not mention buildings on this property. Cyrus Cobb may have been responsible for the construction of this house, as "painter" was a term used interchangeably with "builder" during the 19th century in the Boston area. Cobb is first listed in Charlestown directories in 1845 as a painter residing at Gorham Place. In 1848 he was a painter at the Navy Yard and lived at 4 Salem Hill. By 1856 he is listed at 11 Chestnut Street and was still working at the Navy Yard. He is not listed in the 1860 Charlestown directory.

James Emery is listed on Russell Street beginning in 1842, his occupation, then, carriage smith. Emery sold 58 and 60 Russell to Joseph F Wilson, of Boston, a sailor, for \$1800 on April 8, 1856. Joseph F Wilson sold 60 to Robert Wilson on November 20, 1868 (Middlesex 1041:396) for \$2300. Robert Wilson is listed in 1870 directories as a tailor, at 58 Temple Place, Boston. Numbers 58 and 60 Russell Street remained in the Wilson family until at least the early 1900s.

Russell Street was developed in several stages between approximately the early 1800s until about 1860. It appears unlabeled on the 1818 map, running only from Pearl to Walker Street. It was later extended to Oak Street's circa 1840s; by 1851 it terminated just beyond Oak Street and was cut through to Auburn Street by circa the early 1860s. Russell Street's streetscape reflects a relatively slow development over time with housing stock ranging from the late 1830s Greek Revival wood frame to circa 1880s and 90s Italianate and Georgian Revival masonry apartment buildings.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Middlesex deeds-353:288, 359:297, 731:479, 1040:396

*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.

R Dinsmore