

73-75 Lawrence St. (circa 1845-1846)

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



73, 75 Lawrence Street

2015

Numbers 73-75 Lawrence Street is a two-story double Greek Revival house. The building has a broad gable roof and each half has two gable-roofed dormers. The main and rear façades were originally clad with clapboards (now with modern siding), and the end-wall gables are brick. The houses have granite block basements with small square windows. They have three bay main façades with paired entrances and a simple pilasters and entablatures. The windows are simply enframed.

Builder: John H Burrell and Milton Hall, Jr

Original owner: John H Burrell and Milton Hall, Jr

Together with numbers 61-63, and 65-67 Lawrence Street, 73-75 provides the Phipps Street Cemetery with an attractive backdrop. Although these houses have been altered in terms of form and fenestration, they retain their original form and some mid-19th century elements. Numbers 73 and 75 Lawrence represent a relatively rare Charlestown/Boston example of a Greek Revival "brick ender" double house.



75, 73, 67, 65, 63, and 61 Lawrence Street

2015

Although Phipps Street is an old way leading to the Phipps Street Cemetery, dating to at least the 1770s, Lawrence Street was set out as late as 1845. Numbers 73 and 75 Lawrence date to circa 1845-46. Apparently, these houses are the work of Boston housewrights John H Burrell and Milton Hall, Jr. Burrell is listed in 1840s/50s Boston directories. Milton Hall, Jr is first

listed in the Boston directory of 1853, although deeds indicate he was involved in Charlestown land speculation by at least 1845. During the 1850s he lived at Cherry Street, Boston. Milton Hall, a carpenter, is listed in 1840s' directories at 5 Jefferson Street, in Bay Village. Presumably this was Nelson Hall, Jr's father. The Halls are listed in the 1855 Boston directory.

Middlesex deeds indicate that key figures in the development of nearby Essex Street were also involved in Lawrence Street developments, e.g. James Hunnewell and Lowell W Chamberlain. In any event Burrell and Hall sold 73 and 75's lots for \$500 to Thomas Hooper, a Charlestown gentleman, on August 5, 1845 (Middlesex 472: 82). Hooper is listed as a bank officer, at 168 Main Street. This deed mentions "a new street called Lawrence Street" but does not mention houses on these lots. Houses are mentioned in an indenture dated October 15, 1849 between John L Taggard, merchant/Isaac Cook, machinist/Edward Ward, trader and John H Burrell/Milton Hall, Jr.

Owners during the early 1850s were James Hunnewell, Middlesex Canal Company agent and later treasurer, 75, and City Treasurer Lowell W Chamberlain (see Middlesex deed 551:434). By the early 1860s Dennis Gillespie, a driver, owned 73, and by 1875 Gillespie owned 73 and a C Simmonds owned 75.

Note: the 1818 map indicates that these houses were just to the northeast of Chapman's Wharf. Across a cove from Chapman's Wharf was the State Prison at Prison Point. Nearby Austin Street ran southward to the Prison Point Bridge, which, in turn, was linked to Craigie's Bridge and ultimately East Cambridge. Numbers 73 and 75 Lawrence Street are a product

of Charlestown's 1840s building boom, triggered in part by the coming of European immigrants to the Boston area and the trend toward selling off land during the waning years of the Middlesex Canal's profitability (1840s-1850s)

*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