

8, 10 (circa 1847) and 12, 14 (circa 1846) Mount Vernon Street

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



10, 8 Mt Vernon Street

12016

Numbers 8, 10 and 12, 14 Mount Vernon Street are pairs of red brick, flat front Greek Revival townhouses. They have three bay main facades, granite basements, side hall plans, and gable roofs. Number 8's end wall, facing Mount Vernon Avenue, has linked chimneys. The cornices have dentil-like brickwork and each house has one pedimented dormer in the main façade roof slope.

Their entrances were originally recessed, but all now feature later outer doors and transoms. There are heavy brownstone lintels over the entrances. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels and 2/2 wood sash.



12 Mt Vernon Street

2016



14 Mt Vernon Street

2016

Builder: Henry Dana, mason; Edward Pratt, housewright
Original owner: #8-Joseph Pierce; #14-Henry Dana

Built circa 1846-47, these houses are key components in the "wall" of flat front masonry houses lining the southwest side of Mount Vernon Street. This remarkably unspoiled streetscape, including the opposite side of the street, extends virtually unbroken down the eastern slope of breeds Hill from Mount

Vernon Avenue to Adams Street. The houses are indicative; of the conservatism of 19th century Charlestown housing. Here, flat fronts predominate at a time when fashionable Boston enclaves such as Louisburg Square were being built up with bow front townhouses with heavy Doric pilasters and pedimented entablatures. These houses' surface treatments are extremely plain, characterized by simple brownstone sills and lintels and heavier lintel bars over the entrances. The only concession to surface ornamentation is the dentil-like brick course at each cornice.

These houses stand on lot 25 of the Ebenezer Breed mansion house estate. The old Breed estate was subdivided into 34 house lots in March 1846 (see "plan of building lots, Breed mansion house plan on Adams Street, Charlestown, March 1846") the Breed mansion house was a large L-shaped building located at what is now 38 Mount Vernon Street. The 1848 Panoramic View of Bunker Hill indicates that the upper portion of Mount Vernon Street built up quickly, within the short space of two years.

Numbers 8-14 Mount Vernon are the work of Henry Dana, a mason, and Edward Pratt, a carpenter. Henry Dana was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1840 until circa 1890. He is listed as a mason, boarding at 52 Main Street, in 1842. By 1845 he lived at 13 Bow Street (now Devens Street). He is first listed as living on Mount Vernon Street in 1848.

Edward Pratt was active in Charlestown building trades from circa early 1830s until the mid-1850s. Evidently he was related to Caleb Pratt; in 1834, both Caleb Pratt and Edward Pratt lived at 32 High Street/23 Franklin Street (see form). From 1845 to circa 1856 Edward Pratt lived at 26 Green Street. Pratt had purchased number 8's lot from Gustavus V Hall (see Middlesex

481: 326), and on June 23, 1847 he sold it to Joseph Pierce of Charlestown, a "cabinetmaker" for \$785.25. Pierce sold number 8 to James P Hastings, a teller, Merchant Bank, for \$4250 on May 1, 1855. Hastings in turn sold it to Isaac W Blanchard for \$4500 on July 25, 1859. Blanchard was a bookkeeper at Boston Eagle Bank. He owned this house until at least 1885. The house was owned by P J Bench, "police station 1" by 1892, and by Edward Barry by the early 1900s.

Further research is needed to determine the original owners of 10 and 12 Mount Vernon Street. A John L Curtis lived at 10 Mount Vernon from the 1860s until at least 1885. In 1874 his place of work is listed as "70 State Street, Boston." Charles W Sawyer, a fruit dealer, 4 and 8 Broad Street, Boston, purchased 12 at some point circa late 1850s. By the mid-1870s his trade as listed as "machinist". Sawyer's heirs owned this house until at least 1885. Later owners of 12 included Agnes J Doherty (1890s), Ellen M Leonard (1900s), and John Dolan (1910s).

Henry Dana, a mason, purchased 14's land from Edward Pratt on July 11, 1846 for \$840. Dana lived here until at least 1892. By the early 1900s, number 14 was owned by a John Dolan.

Bibliography:

Map 1818, 1852

Atlases 1868, 1875 1885, 1892, 1901, 19 11

Charlestown directory -1834-74

Boston directory-post-1875

Middlesex deeds-8-481: 326, 501:556, 701:549, 821:8; # 14-481:326, 488:408

Panoramic View of Bunker Hill, 1848

*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