

8-16 Auburn Street (ca. 1868)

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



8- 16 Auburn Street

2015

Numbers 8-16 Auburn Street is a row of five red brick Italianate houses with three bay facades, three-story octagonal bays, and side hall entrances. They have brickwork dentil courses below heavy, deep, cast iron cornices.

Flights of stairs lead to entrances with heavy, bracketed door hoods. The windows have a simple brownstone sills and lintels, and the lower portions of the lintels have scalloped edges.

Builder: George F Shepard (?)

Original owner: Abel E Bridge

The great majority of row houses built in Charlestown between circa 1845-1880 have flat fronts reflecting the conservatism of local builders and masons. Bow front row houses popular in the South End during the 1850s and 1860s were rarely built in Charlestown during this period. These houses are a relatively rare Charlestown example of a group of octagonal fronted row houses. Much of this group's charm depends on the repetition of stoops, projecting bracketed door hoods, the bays themselves and the bracketed cornice.

They were built circa 1868, apparently as a speculative venture by Abel E Bridge. Evidently Bridge purchased this group's lot from Hannah and Alonzo Hall on March 30, 1868 for \$4948.29. The Hall/Bridge deed does not mention buildings. This group was probably built during the spring and summer of 1868. Its parcel had been part of the land holdings of the James Hall family. Auburn Street was originally known as Hall Street and evidently existed as a cul-de-sac as early as the 1810s. James Hall operated a dye house, for silks, at the corner of Auburn and Main streets (which corner is unclear) during the second quarter of the 19th century. James's son Moses B Hall was a

well-known grocery store owner in Charlestown (Salem, corner Main Street, see form on 265-271 Main) from the late 1840s-1891. Moses B Hall's son Alonzo, a Boston leather dealer, evidently held on to number 12s lot for a house of his own.

In 1875 this group's owners included Moses Hunt-8, William J Denson-10, Alonzo Hall, leather, 35 Portland Street, Boston, N C Curtis, a milkman-14, George F Shepard, mason and builder-16. Shepard may have been responsible for this group's construction. Further research is needed to determine the date range of his activity in Charlestown building trade.

Owners in 1901 included: James M Emery-8, M Van Nostrand-10, Moses B Hall-12, Joseph L Boardman-14 and George F Shepard-16.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1860s-1870s

Souvenir of Charlestown and Bunker Hill Monument, published by the Bunker Hill times, Charlestown Massachusetts, 1843-1893

*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