

8 Salem Street (circa 1799-1800)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



8 Salem Street

1981

Eight Salem Street is a three-story wood frame Federal house with a five bay main façade and a low granite block basement. Narrow boards accent the corners. It has a simple projecting cornice and low hip roof. There are two chimneys on the main block and there is a tall chimney on a rear ell.

The house has a center hall plan, and its entrance is flanked by slender Doric pilasters and entablature with a deep cornice. The windows are simply enframed with 6/6 wood sash, and there are small square windows at the third level, typically Federal.



8 Salem Street

2015

Builder: Thomas Osgood

Original owner: Thomas Osgood

This house, built circa 1799-1804 by Thomas Osgood, a housewright, is part of Charlestown's remarkable collection of wood frame Federal houses. Architecturally, it is a rare Boston area example of a relatively substantial wood frame Federal house.

Its lot was part of the extensive landholdings of Oliver Holden. Oliver Holden was an active and prominent Charlestown resident between 1790 and 1840. He was a preacher, composer of music and extensive operator in real estate. Indeed, he was one of the most prominent men in Charlestown after it's rebuilding following the devastation wrought by the British in 1775. Holden's mansion stood on the site of what is now the Oliver Holden School on Pearl Street. In addition, Holden was evidently a house builder.

On August 4, 1799 Oliver Holden sold 8 Salem's lot to Thomas Osgood, a housewright, for \$400 (Middlesex 133:295). The Holden/Osgood deed describes Salem Street as "a new street" laid out "from Main Street to land of my own purchased by David Wood".

Thomas Osgood was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1780s (?) to his death on July 26, 1828. Osgood's children, Isaac, Hannah M, Harriet and Sarah P Osgood, sold the house to Capt. Thomas Rice on July 12, 1826 (Middlesex 285:280-283). Rice received "a certain dwelling house with the land under and adjoining"-presumably the land adjoining refers to number 2 Salem Street Avenue's lot. In 1834, Rice is listed at 4 Salem Street (occupation unspecified). On August 5, 1843 Rice's heirs sold this property (8 Salem Street) to Daniel E Hayes, Thomas R Hayes and Francis A Flint, all of Oakland, and John Hayes of Colton, in the territory of Washington (Middlesex 1606:606).

During the 1870s and 80s Doctor E Hayes owned this house and by the early 1890s it was owned by Nathaniel W Robinson. Dennis A Madeiros owned this house by 1901.

Bibliography:

Maps-1775, 1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1870s

Middlesex deeds-133: 295, 233:28?, 1602:606

A Century of Town Life-TF Hunnewell, 1887, page 97

*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.

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