

9, 11, 13 Union Street (1828)

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



9-13 Union Street

1875, R. Severy, S P N E A

Numbers 9- 13 Union Street is a trio of red brick, granite trimmed, row houses. All three buildings have granite-faced basements, three bay main façades, and side hall plans. They have simple stone sills and lintels, unusual round moldings, and mostly 2/2 wood sash. Originally they were identical Federal masonry buildings.

Number 9 has a square headed entrance with an outer transom and a mid-19th century inner door, with no trace of an entrance arch. It is enclosed by a gable roof with a small dormer that appears to be original- the only original dormer in the group.



9-13 Union Street

2015



11 Union Street, window molding detail

Number 13 retains its entrance arch but the archway has been filled in with an outer door and solid semicircular arch. This house exhibits a distinctive gable end with a linked chimney profile.

At some point in the late 19th century, number 11 added changes in the Queen Anne style. A third-floor and a two-story oriel were added, while it retains its entrance arch (with replacement front door). The oriel, which spans floors two and three, is composed of metal with apron panels. Above the oriel windows of the second level are two rows of small square recessed panels, which continue the recessed square panels of the adjacent brickwork parapet. A two-course band of terra cotta tiles visually separates floors one and two, also a late 19th century alteration.



11 Union Street

1980s

Builder: Laommi Kendall

Original owner: Jacob Forster Junior/Laommi Kendall Eliab P. Mackintire



11 Union Street cornice and oriel detail 2015

Built circa 1828, Numbers 9, 11 and 13 Union were originally identical modestly scaled Federal row houses. At some point during the late 19th century 11 was transformed into a Queen Anne tenement via the addition of a third floor and two-story oriel window. In their original condition, this trio with its distinctive entrance arches was similar to the Federal houses at numbers 27 and 29 Washington, and 17, 19 Elwood Street. These houses may represent the work of Loammi Kendall, "Carpenter and surveyor".

Middlesex deeds point to a construction date of circa 1828. Apparently the trio's lots were carved from the estate of Catherine Bradish. The Bradish house was located on or just to the rear of the present Union Block site (112, 114, 116 Main Street). The Bradish house is described as having been composed of wood, with yellow paint. It was surrounded by a garden shaded by Lombardy poplars. Also in the area was "the little house of Abijah Smith, a gunsmith." The last of the Bradish land was carved up into house lots in 1837 to make way for the previously mentioned Union Block. Jacob Forster played a key role in the development of the Bradish estate, along with Edward Lawrence, William Tufts, and Laommi Kendall. Evidently it was Jacob Forster Jr who was involved in this development. Jacob Senior was a cabinetmaker and resident of Charlestown from 1786-1838. For many years he owned a lot across from 9-13 Union at the west corner of Union and Main streets. On this land he erected a large wooden building that was used as a furniture storehouse.

Jacob Forster Jr was a commission merchant in partnership with George Thompson at Long Wharf, Boston. Forster was later president of the Fitchburg Railroad. He was born in 1803 and died in 1857. On December 6, 1827 Forster sold number 9's lot to Laommi Kendall, a carpenter and surveyor, for \$480. Presumably 9-13 Union were built by Laommi Kendall during the following year. Original owners of this trio included Laommi Kendall-9 and 11 (?) and Eliab P Mackintire, a Charlestown merchant-number 13. (See form on 35-39 Union Street for more on Mackintire.) Laommi Kendall was active in Charlestown building trades from at least the mid-1820s, until 1840. After 1840 he worked as a "surveyor of lumber." He died circa early 1860s.

By 1875 this trio's owners included the heirs of Laommi Kendall-9, N. Hill- 11, and Andrew Burns, variously described as "clothing" and "tailor"-13. By 1885 John P Hazlett, manager of the Boston Sarven (?) Wheel Company, 43 Beverley Street, Boston, owned 9, Thomas Doherty owned 11 and Andrew Burns continued to own 13. Members of the Hazlett, Doherty and Burns families owned these houses until at least 1911.

Union Street appears on the 1818 Peter Tufts map. It was accepted as a street from Main to Washington streets on September 16, 1813, possibly existing as a path prior to that date.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Charlestown directories-1834-74

Middlesex deeds-781: 31, 761:110, 501:102, 278:7, (in reference to number 13)

Charlestown Enterprise and Evening News, "Time Turned Back", page 1

*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.

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