

**Historic Houses in EG**  
By Bruce MacGunnigle

The Darius Hart Tenement - 11 Lion Street

Darius Hart purchased land on Lion Street for his home in 1839, but the records are silent about the Tenement at 11 Lion Street, until it appears on the 1870 Beers Atlas, directly across Lion Street from his home.

I consider this building to be one of the most unusual structures in our town, and a rare survivor of the industrial history of our town. To me, it was clearly built as housing for the families who were drawn to East Greenwich to work in our mills as early as 1827. Up until World War II, East Greenwich was dependent on what I call the three F's: Farmers, Fishermen and Factory workers, all of whom have nearly faded into history.

Workers living in the village could walk to work at several nearby mills. The Bostitch factory was on the corner of Division and Duke Streets, the Bay Mill was on the corner of King and Water Streets, The Dry Salters Mill was at the corner of Main and Union Streets, and the Bleachery was located at the corner of Post Road and Cedar Street. The last 2 are gone completely.

Architectural historians would call the Darius Hart Tenement, also known as "Hart's Block", a well-preserved example of vernacular architecture, meaning buildings that are concerned with being domestic and functional, rather than monumental buildings. In simple language, they are common buildings as opposed to the impressive mill buildings that they were built to complement.

This building has 7 bays (or openings, either doors or windows) on the street side, and 9 bays on the railroad side, which is unusual in itself. The building is 2 bays deep, and has center entries on both street and railroad sides. There are 2 internal chimneys centered on each side. Most of the windows today are 2 panes over 2, but there are a few of the original 6 over 6 that have survived.

The builder, Darius Hart (1806-1875), was born in Little Compton, the son of David B. & Elizabeth (Sherman) Hart. Darius was married 3 times: (1) Hannah Bowen (1809-1857), (2) Mary Reynolds (b. 1819), and (3) in 1867 to Lucretia C. Rose (1822-1875). He was a stonemason by trade.

Darius Hart died in 1875, age 69, and he left all his real property to his wife Lucretia C. Hart, and after her death it was to be shared equally between his son Ephraim Bowen Hart and his daughter Hannah Bowen (Hart) Mitchell, wife of George C. Mitchell. They appear to be his only children, who he had with his 1<sup>st</sup> wife Hannah Bowen. In 1877, Hannah B. (Hart) Mitchell (1838-1908), and her husband George Cartwright Mitchell (1833-1928) sold their rights in the property to her brother Ephraim B. Hart.

Ephraim Bowen Hart (1835-1905), a house painter, married twice: (1) Mary Rice (1841-1867), and they had 2 sons; Verrano Verennyzy Hart (1862-1942), a carpenter, and Darius Alden Hart (1864-1945), a machinist.

Ephraim married (2) 1873 Mary \_\_\_\_\_ (1845-1901), and had 2 more sons: Ephraim Leroy Hart (b. 1877), a manager of a concrete company, and Reuben Allen Bowen Hart (1860-1969), a dry goods salesman.

Ephraim B. Hart outlived two wives, and died in 1905, but he didn't leave a will, so his 4 sons inherited all the property equally. The 4 brothers in 1906 each transferred their ownership share to Darius Alden Hart's wife, Eunice A. Hart (1874-1945). In 1910, Eunice transferred ownership of this structure to her husband Darius A. Hart, and in 1919, he sold it to Louis & Crestina Maddalena, who continued to live next door.

Lodovico (or Louis) Maddalena (1893-1981) was born in Italy, and emigrated 1910 or 1911. He worked at the Brown & Sharpe foundry. In 1904 he married Christina or Crestina (Melucci) Maddalena (1894-1970). She was also born in Italy, and emigrated in 1913 or 1914. They had 5 children, all born in RI: Yolanda, b. 1916 (married Leonard A. Librizzi), Armand 1917 (he was a WWII Air Corps veteran, and married Mary Ann Cassamass), Janet 1921 (married Blaise Pinto), Harold 1922 (a WWII Army veteran) and Gloria 1927 (married Vincent R. Mulhearn).

In the 1951 School Census, there were 5 families living here: William & Louise Northup and their 2 children Barbara, b. 1941, and William 1945; Helen V. Pierce, b. 1886; Geanfermi Enrico, b. 1902; Norman J. & Bernice T. Couchan and their son Norman, b. 1950; and Rose T. Stroud, b. 1900.

In 1958, Ludovico and Crestina sold "Hart's Block" and 2 other properties to their son Harold L. Maddelena and Vincent R. Mulhearn, their daughter Gloria's husband. In 1960, the Mulhearns sold their interest to Harold L. Maddelena and Blaise Pinto, husband of Harold's sister Janet.

In 1981, Blaise & Janet C. (Maddelena) Pinto sold their interest in the properties to her brother Harold L. Maddelena. In 2011, Harold Maddelena sold the property to Ronald J. Amirault, a Warwick CPA, who is the current owner.

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