

George and Smith Owen Building
9 Steeple Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-256

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
153-

PHOTOGRAPH
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

GEORGE AND SMITH OWEN BUILDING

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
153-

Present Address: 9 Steeple Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.

Plat 10, Lot 43.

Present Owner: Lester J. Millman and wife Ida.

Present Occupant: Millman Associates, Architects and Planners, and
Steeple Development Company.

Present Use: Office building.

Brief Statement of Significance: This is an example of a small, mid-nineteenth century commercial building, originally a place of business for several jewelry manufacturers.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and subsequent owners:

1751 Joseph Angell gives to his son Nathan Angell, Innkeeper, in consideration of the love and good will and affection I have and do bear towards my dutiful son, give one full moiety or half part of my three lots of land in Providence opposite to the Homestead land of my brother John Angell and joining the W side of the Town Street and where I now dwell, each of which lots measure 40' on said street...whole three lots lying together on said Town Street; S on a gangway (Steeple Street) and W on channel of salt Water River...with one full moiety of the dwelling House and all other buildings and improvements...Deed Book 12, page 496, in Providence City Hall.

1798 CADY places Nathan Angell here [John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957)].

1805 Nathan Angell, Innholder, gives to Nathan Angell, Jr., a certain lot of land bounded: N by Public gangway E by King's Highway..140', W by channel of river 140', S by public gangway (Steeple Street) "The lot being where I now dwell together with the Mansion House and all other buildings and improvements"...Deed Book 39, page 231, in Providence City Hall.

1841-2 George and Smith Owen, Jewellers, shop was here at #9 Steeple..Providence Directory.

- 1842 Arba B. Dike, for \$910 sell to George and Smith Owen, at public auction (the highest bidders) for Joseph K Angell, son of Nathan Angell, Jr. a certain lot of land bounded:
N by 17' gangway 20' E by lot #3 on N Angell Plat 40'
S by Steeple Street 20' W by lot #5 on N Angell Plat 40'
AND is Lot #4 on the Nathan Angell Plat by B Lockwood in 1842 plat card #19..."it being understood that inasmuch as the building and improvements on said lot are the property of the grantees, the buildings and improvements are not conveyed with said lot." Joseph K Angell issues quit claim to George and Smith Owen...Deed Book 85, page 19, in Providence City Hall. Lot #3 is thrown open as a gangway for the Benefit of the owners of Lots #1, #2, #10, and #4...Deed Book 85, page 62, in Providence City Hall.
- 1847 Arba Dike for \$100, and Welcome Congdon for \$225 respectively, owners of the lot and brick stores thereon on the N side of Steeple Street NEXT WEST of the lot now occupied by George and Smith Owens, and on which the said George and Smith Owens PROPOSE to erect a NEW BRICK STORE, give them the said G and S Owens the right to use the E wall of the brick store, belonging to said Welcome Congdon, standing on the land of said Dike, for the purpose of building thereon and fastening thereto a store or other building, to be by said G & S Owens, erected on said ADJOINING land now occupied by them, and they may use said E wall so long as said estate belonging to said Congdon shall remain and not be destroyed by fire or other casualty...Deed Book 105, page 254, in Providence City Hall.
- 1854 Property was taxed to George and Smith Owen.....
- 1855 The building was occupied by the shop of Ezekiel, George & Smith Owens...Providence Directory.
- 1855-6 The following jewellers and silversmiths occupied this building:
W A Browning Seth A Cheney
George W Congdon George H. Church
Chester Clarke
George & Smith Owen
Providence Directory.
- 1863 George and Smith Owens, partners of "George and Smith Owens" Jewellers, sell for \$8000 to Orin A Read; one lot of land with a brick building thereon standing, situated on the N/ly side of Steeple Street and is Lot #4 on the plat of the Angell Estate which plat is in Book #1 of plats, page 52, plat card #19..

"being the same lot conveyed to grantor by deed from Arba Dike dated 1842....85/19 and also all our interest to one certain easement conveyed to grantor from Arbor B. Dike and Welcome Congdon in 1847...105/254...the conveyance subject to present occupancy by certain tenants"..Deed Book 166, page 157, in Providence City Hall.

- 1864 The property is taxed to Orin A Read and to his
to estate until 1920..
1876
- 1864 And until 1877 the building was occupied by Orin A
Read...Stove Dealers and Tinsmiths.
- 1877 The building was occupied by Jonathan Allenson et al
until 1960...Providence Directory.
- 1905 Russell Read et al sell the property to Elizabeth and
Samuel Baker et al...Deed Book 477, page 89, in
Providence City Hall.
- 1920 Nathan N Baker et al sell the property to Charles
Allenson et al
Bounded: N by 17' gangway 20' E by gangway 40'
S by Steeple Street 20' W by Congdon 40'
- 1960 Property is taxed to the Burnside Corporation
- 1960 Owners are Lester J. Millman and wife, Ida

B. Date of erection: 1847.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1963

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is an example of a small, mid-nineteenth century brick commercial building.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. The exterior, except for the ground floor at the front, preserves its original appearance. The interior has been completely remodeled for offices by the present owners.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 20' (south front) x 40', three-and-a-half stories.
2. Foundations: Granite ashlar.
3. Wall construction: Brick; running bond on south front, common bond on east side and rear, party wall on west side; smoother faced brick on front wall. Original open shop front on ground floor, four bays, with granite posts and granite lintel supporting brick wall above; granite posts now removed.
4. Openings:
 - a. Windows: Double-hung windows, six-light sash, plain granite lintels and sills.
5. Roof: Pitched roof with high monitor across the full width.

- C. Site: Commercial area, building faces south, set at sidewalk line at the front, adjoining building on the west, alleys on the east and north.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby
Yale University
May 1963