

Ray's Warehouse and Office
(now Corson and Gruman Company)
3260-3262 K Street, N.W.
Washington (Georgetown)
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-148

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

RAY'S WAREHOUSE AND OFFICE
(now Corson and Gruman Company)

Location: 3260 and 3262 K Street, N.W. (Georgetown,) Washington, D.C., south side of street, at foot of Potomac Street.

Present Owner: Corson and Gruman Co., paving contractors.

Present Occupant: Same.

Present Use: Storage and repair shop.

Statement of Significance: 3262 K St. was one of the original dock buildings of the important Georgetown milling firm of A. Ross Ray & Bro. during the second half of the 19th century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following information is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the buildings were erected. The site is in Square 1176, Lot 801 (old square 6, old lots 29 and 30). The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia.

1853 Deed February 26, 1853 recorded March 11, 1853 in
Liber JAS 52 folio 228

Joseph Nicholson et ux Martha Jane
To

Andrew Ross Ray
Albert Ray

Land in Georgetown beginning at the northeast corner of lot 29 on the south side of Water Street and running south with the east line of lot 29, 56 feet; thence due west to west line of tail race on said lot; thence south with west line of said tail race to Potomac River; thence westerly with said Potomac River to west line of lot 30; thence north and with west line of said lot 30 to Water St. and thence east in south line of Water to beginning. To be held as tenants in common.

1885 Deed March 30, 1885 recorded April 20, 1885 in
Liber 1119 folio 276

Andrew Ross Ray et ux Eliza L.
Amanda J. Ray (widow of Albert Ray)
Ella R. Howe et vir Frank H.
Robert C. Ray et ux Carrie P.
Charles M. Ray
Clary Ray

- To
George W. Cissel
Lots 29 and 30. "Recites that Joseph Nicholson and wife by deed dated February 26, 1853 and recorded in Liber JAS No. 52 folio 228 did convey to Andrew Ross and Albert Ray, the above described property as tenants in common, and since the execution of said deed, the said Albert Ray has departed this life intestate, leaving as his widow and only heirs at law, the said Amanda J. Ray, Ella R. Howe, Robert C. Ray, Charles M. Ray, and Clary Ray." Consideration \$3000. N.B.: The original form of the whole lot had a section removed for a tail race (1853 deed).
- 1886 Deed December 27, 1886 recorded December 29, 1886 in Liber 1220 folio 323
Clary Ray unmarried
To
George W. Cissell
Confirms deed of March 26, 1885 and March 30, 1885. (Deeds 1119-280 and 1119-276 were made by the grantor when he was a minor, but now is 21 years old.)
- 1898 Deed April 2, 1898 recorded June 24, 1898 in Liber 2306 folio 473
George W. Cissel
To
District of Columbia
"Right to enter upon and thru lots 29, 30 Square 1176.... a strip 25' wide and there construct sewer under the surface...and to do all things necessary." (No assessment or increase in tax against Cissel.) (N.B.: This goes directly under 2260 Water St. but does not touch the next building as it comes up the tail race essentially, and in back of the full lot 30.)
- 1902 Deed December 1, 1902 recorded December 2, 1902 in Liber 2676 folio 460
George W. Cissel et ux Agnes C.
To
The G. W. Cissel Co., a corporation created and existing under the laws of D.C.
- 1913- Decree November 13, 1913 recorded July 30, 1914 in
14 Liber 3731 folio 211
The G.W. Cissel Co. Inc., bankrupt
Amended petition filed October 27, 1913 that the G.W. Cissel Co. Inc. be adjudged as bankrupt. It appeared in court, pleading in Eq. Case #31975 said respondent

insolvent. Adjudged bankrupt November 13, 1913 and referred to referee E. S. McCalmont.

- 1914 Order May 12, 1914 recorded July 30, 1914 in Liber 3731 folio 212, Bankruptcy #906
In re
George W. Cissel Co., Bankrupt
W. S. Hoge Jr. applied to and given bond with Fidelity and Deposit Co. of Md. of \$5000. December 17, 1913 said bond approved. Ed. S. McCalmont, referee.
- 1914 Deed July 20, 1914 recorded July 30, 1914 in Liber 3731 folio 271
W. S. Hoge Jr.
Trustee in Bankruptcy #906
SCDC in re G. W. Cissel Co.
To
George W. Offutt Jr.
Charles L. Bowman
Includes part of lot 79 (1185) and part of lot 80 (1185) (north of K Street, and opposite). Also chattels used in connection with Mill erected on part of said property. In trust for sole use of the National Capital Bank, Potomac Savings Bank, Farmers and Mechanics National Bank of Georgetown, Union Savings Bank and H. A. Waters, according to their separate interests as set forth in said bankruptcy case, and with deed August 3, 1914 (Liber 3730 folio 248, August 4, 1914).
- 1914 Deed August 31, 1914 recorded September 9, 1914 in Liber 3745 folio 16
George W. Offutt Jr.
Charles L. Bowman
Trustees under 2 Deeds in Trust from W.S. Hoge Jr.
To
Rose B. Parks
Lots 29 and 30, Square 1176 (described in 3561-284). Subject to lot 79 to use recorded in Liber WB 141 folio 256, subject also for sewer for upper part of Georgetown and water from mill of George Bomford, with all easements, buildings and improvements of every kind, machinery and chattels, leases, and franchises which belong to the Co.
- 1920 Deed December 4, 1920 recorded February 8, 1921 in Liber 4483 folio 426
Samuel G. Eberly
Charles L. Bowman

George W. Offutt Jr.
Charles H. Cragin

Trustees under Deed in Trust from
Rose B. Parks dated September 9, 1914
Liber 3745 folio 19
To

Eugene W. Hense

Lots 29, 30, Square 1176, subject to the privilege
of right of way or outlet for a tail race to carry
off water used by owners of parts of lots 79 and 80
in Square 1185 for milling or other purposes. Also
subject to sewer rights held by D.C. under the deed
recorded in Liber 2306 folio 473.

1921 Deed January 12, 1921 recorded June 1, 1921 in
Liber 4546 folio 18

Eugene W. Hense unmarried
To

Jessie Owen Cugle

Subject to deed in trust of \$15,000.

1922 Deed October 16, 1922 recorded October 19, 1922 in
Liber 4813 folio 345

Jessie Owen Cugle
To

Anna C. Harris

Subject to a deed in trust of \$15,000.

1922 Deed October 17, 1922 recorded October 19, 1922 in
Liber 4813 folio 346

Anna C. Harris (unmarried)
To

James P. Jefferies

Subject to deed in trust of \$15,000.

1922 Deed October 17, 1922 recorded October 25, 1922 in
Liber 4826 folio 335

James P. Jefferies, unmarried
To

Gustav G. Loehler

Subject to the existing deed in trust for \$15,000.

1925 Lease June 27, 1924 recorded January 8, 1925
Instrument #154

G. G. Loehler

To

Paul H. Brattain Co.

"Lease two story brick building on the east of Lot 801
in Square 1176, rear 32nd and K Streets, Northwest,

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for the term of one year, beginning July 15, 1924 at rental of \$420, payable in monthly installments of \$35 in advance. Privilege of renewing this lease for further term of two years, and purchase for \$4000 during life of this lease or any extension thereof."

- 1926 Deed March 8, 1926 recorded March 9, 1926 in Liber 5715 folio 200
Gustav G. Loehler et ux Marie J.
To
Mutual Building Supply Co. (Corporation of Delaware)
- 1936 Liber 5695 folio 292, March 5, 1936
Sale at Public Auction
To
Myer Cohen
Alexander C. Robeson
Sold on July 17, 1936 to second party for \$25,000, they being the best bidder.
- 1936 Deed August 14, 1936 recorded October 7, 1936 in Liber 7038 folio 85
Alexander C. Robeson
Surviving trustee
To
Rosa P. Hayes, widow
(1936, still has a reference to the tail race.)
- 1951 Will of Rosa P. Hayes dated October 14, 1926 admitted July 17, 1951 in the Orphan's Court for Montgomery Co., Md. Ex. copy filed, August 1, 1951, Will book 419, folio 596.
Among other property: lot 801, Sq. 1176, improved by premises 3260, 3262, 3264; assessed at \$30, 087.
(1952, the tail race appears to be filled in and the land now part of lot 800.)
- 1952 Deed November 20, 1951 recorded February 1, 1952 in Liber 9654 folio 533, Instrument #6749
Sidney Paige)
surviving trustee under will) 1st
of Rosa P. Hayes)
Lida Paige, sister of Rosa P. Hayes) 2nd
To
Wolcott P. Hayes)
Ellen Hayes Mitchell)
Sidney P. Hayes) 3rd
Margaret Hayes Hibbs)
Rosa Hayes Mathewson)
Oliver W. Hayes)
David W. Hayes)
C. Willar Hayes)
sole heirs

1952 Deed June 13, 1952 recorded June 25, 1952 in
Liber 9654 folio 539
C. Willard Hayes
Ellen Hayes Mitchell
trustees under deed in trust from Walcott P. Hayes
and others, November 21, 1951 recorded February 1,
1952, Liber 9654 folio 539
To
Corson and Gruman Company, a D.C. corporation
Consideration: \$32,500.

1964 Lusk's D.C. Real Estate Directory
3260-64 K St.: Corson and Gruman Co.

2. Date of erection: 3262 K St: about 1855. 3260 K St: about 1885. The lots were vacant when acquired in 1853 (Liber JAS, folio 228); the mill on the corner of Potomac and K Street was built for the Ray family in 1847, and this property was probably needed for storage and shipping. The Assessment records indicate that the warehouse was standing there about 1865. The later building, 3260 K St., is clearly built onto the side of the warehouse, and in 1890 is designated in the City Directory as the office for the George W. Cissel & Co., successors to A. Ross Ray & Bro. The 1886 directory of Austin Herr, who took over the Ray Mill with Cissel, includes 3258-3262 K St., which includes this building. It was probably built shortly before, perhaps as a central office for the several mills as it is in domestic rather than commercial style.

The following information is from Georgetown Assessments for Real and Personal Property taxes 1865-70 (National Archives Microcopy 605, Group 351, roll 12): Lots 29 and 30, 40 6/12 feet south line of Water Street, 60 feet deep (the rest of the depth of lot 29 was occupied at this time by a tail race), and 55 6/12 feet south line of Water street, back to River, improved: small brick tenement 10 x 12 feet, 2 story, and large brick warehouse -- \$3500.

3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Alterations and additions: Second floor windows of the warehouse were blocked up when the office was added to the east side; interior second floor has been removed, and various other openings closed up, altered and added, perhaps when converted to heavier industrial use by Mutual Building Supply Co. in 1927.
6. Important old views: None known.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. Notes on the Ray family and its business:

The waterpower provided by the C. & O. Canal made Georgetown a good site for mills, and its closeness to transportation both by the canal itself, and the Potomac, made the location ideal. Richard Jackson, in his Chronicles of Georgetown, D.C. 1751-1878, (Washington, D.C., R. O. Polkinhorn, 1878.) writes that there were eight flour mills (including "Ross Ray and Bro." and "A. H. Herr at the foot of the market") and a paper mill. (p. 123). "The flour mills will shell out from one hundred and fifty to three hundred barrels of flour per day" (p. 124); "the flour and produce trade has become one of great importance in our town, and most of our merchants are engaged in that line of business." (p. 124). As an inspection point for flour, as many as 300,000 barrels were examined a year. In William A. Gordon's "Recollections of a Boyhood in Georgetown" (Records of the Columbia Historical Society, vol. 20 p. 130) he mentions not just the activity of the busy waterfront, but, along K Street, "the warehouses filled with flour, tobacco, whiskey, salt, grain and other merchandise." By 1842 we can be sure that flour mills were well established, for in that year, William Morrison, in his Strangers Guide to the City of Washington and its Vicinity notes (p. 75) that in Georgetown "flour mills are numerous and rank with the best in the country."

The flour mill of Alexander Ray, and his two sons Andrew Ross Ray and Albert Ray was built just south of George Bomford's mill, and separated by about 45 feet. Negotiations for the water power that would be needed to run the mill were carried out in 1846 with Mr. Bomford, who had a lease of 400 inches from the Canal Company, and leased 100 inches of this to the Rays. The deed of December 9th, 1846 (recorded March 17, 1848 in Liber WB 141, folio 249) to Alexander Ray states that Bomford had sold "recently" the lower part of lot 79 to Alexander Ray upon which he is to erect a mill. The 100 inches of water was "to be furnished from the present Cotton Mill and Factory of first party through a circular orifice to be made in the side of said factory the bottom of said orifice to be level with the top of the present 30 feet water wheel of said factory to be conducted therefrom in a trunk to be constructed at his [Ray's] own cost."

On the northwest corner of Potomac St. and K Street today is a mill building erected in 1922, but on which is a stone plaque which reads: "Erected for A. Ross Ray and Bro. by Henry Rohrer 1847;" next to it is a similar one which says: "Rebuilt by Wilkins Rogers Milling Co. 1922." Thus while the original

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Ray mill is no longer standing, its site is still used for milling.

In 1851 Alexander Ray bought additional land to the west of this lot, and adjacent to it, part of lot 80, undoubtedly for expanding the mill facilities. In 1853 Andrew Ross Ray and Albert Ray acquired the vacant lots across the street from the mill, and on the waterfront, Nos. 29 and 30 (recorded March 11, 1853, in Liber JAS 52, folio 228).

Our next clue to the development of the Rays' milling is found in the Assessments for Real Property Taxes 1865-70, (National Archives Microcopy No. 605, Group 351, roll 12) that gives us the following information. "A. Ross Ray & Bro." owned the "large Flour mill" at the end of lot 79, also "55 6/12 feet, south line, Water street, back to river: improved, small brick tenament 10 x 12' 2 stories, large brick warehouse--\$3500." This is probably the warehouse presently on the site. Their property next to the mill, on the north side of K Street (53' on the street and 130' deep, according to the assessment records) was improved by "a large 4 story brick warehouse." (p. 294).

Listed under Alexander Ray was a considerable amount of land along the river front, i.e. the southern part of lot 32, lots 33 and 34 "with improvements" (today lot 34 has a 19th century brick structure on it) and also lots 35 through 46, which run "441 feet S. side Water street, back to river--with wharfs." This, we see from directories, was used for coal storage and shipping.

The assessments (Microcopy 605, group 351, roll 13) for 1871 show that lot 79 (presumably the southern part) was valued at \$2000, with the mill at \$30,000; the adjacent lot (part of 80) having a building (probably the 4 story one above) valued at \$3,500, and lots 29 and 30 having "improvements" valued at \$3,600.

When Alexander Ray died in 1878, it was his desire that the mill continue operation. After mentioning his Georgetown property, including ("known at least by the members of the Ray family") "Ray's Mill" and "Ray's Dock" he stated: "I wish and direct that the business of the "Mill" and also that of the "dock" be conducted and carried out jointly by my sons Andrew Ross and Albert Ross, that both properties be kept always in the best repair and the most effective working condition, that they keep the properties properly insured..." (Will of Alexander Ray, Will Bok 17, p. 95, will dated November 25, 1871, probated July 3, 1878.) The "Ray's Dock" mentioned is undoubtedly the coal dock on the C. & O. Canal that was at

30th and K, from which the unloaded coal was transferred to the wharfs on the waterfront.

This was not to be, however, for in 1885 the mill property was sold to George W. Cissel.

Alexander Ray was born in Prince George Parish in 1799, married Harriet Ross in 1822, and besides the flour mill business described above was also active in the coal business. Old photographs of the Georgetown waterfront show that the area in which he held his property, and all the way to the Aqueduct Bridge was one large coal yard, with elevated tracks and great mounds of coal. This was, of course, brought down from the coal fields of Pennsylvania from Cumberland by the C. & O. Canal, and here would be transferred to sea going boats. Thus both of the Ray family enterprises owed much to the very nature of the town, aided by the canal, and the port facility.

2. The following information is from Washington City Directories:

- 1853 A. Ross Ray, res. n side Pa. Ave, bt. 19 & 20th St W,
in Seven Buildings
Alexander Ray, corner 20 west and G north
- 1855 Albert Ray, miller, 396 20th St.
Alexander Ray, 164 G
A. Ross Ray 130 Pa Ave
- 1860 Albert Ray, flour mill, Georgetown (res. 292 H north)
- 1862 A. Ross Ray & Bro., flour mill, 118 Water St, Georgetown
- 1864 A. Ross Ray & Bro., flour grain, feed. Water St. corner
of Potomac (This is the "Ray Mill" south of Bomford's Mill)
- 1865 Albert Ray, flour mill
Alexander Ray, coal. res 164 G. north
A. Ross Ray, rice (sic) mill, res. 172 F. north
- 1866 A. Ross Ray & Bro, flour, grain, etc, Water, cor. Potomac
Alexander Ray, coal, cor. Frederick and Water
- 1867 A. Ross Ray & Co., props. Arlington Mills, Water, corner
Potomac, Georgetown.
- 1868 A. Ross Ray & Bro., milling
Alexander Ray, coal
- 1872 A. Ross Ray & Bro., millers, Water cor. Potomac
Alexander Ray, coal shipper, canal cor. Frederick
- 1878 Alexander Ray: no listing as coal merchant
A. Ross Ray & Bro., same.
- 1881 A. Ross Ray & Bro., millers, 3261 Water St, Georgetown
- 1883 A. Ross Ray, 1901 F st NW (no mention of mill from this
date on).

3. Washington Directories provide the following tenant information:
- 1913 3260 K St. N.W.: The George W. Cissel Co. Inc,
"manufacturers of high grade flours and dealers in
hay and grain"
 - 1915 vacant
 - 1917 3260 K St. N.W.: Wilkins Rogers Milling Co.
 - 1924 no listing.
 - 1925 3260 K St.: Brattain and Allwine, chemists.
 - 1927-29 3260 K St.: Paul H. Brattain Co., chemists
3262 K St.: Mutual Building Supply Co.
(At this date, 1929, Corson & Gruman appears in the
directory at the southeast corner, thus to the east
of these buildings)
 - 1930-43 Bituminous Products Corp., asphalt products
 - 1948-54 no listing
 - 1956-67 Corson & Gruman Inc., contractors.
4. On the 1903 Sanborn Insurance Map, at which time 3260 and
3262 were owned by the G. W. Cissel Co., 3260 is labeled
"office" and 3262 as "flour and feel warehouse". (Sanborn
Insurance atlas, in D.C. Public Library.)

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Recorder of Deeds, District
of Columbia; Washington city directories (D.C. Public Library);
Assessment Records, (National Archives).
2. Secondary and published sources: Journal of the Columbia
Historical Society; Richard P. Jackson, The Chronicles of
Georgetown, D.C., 1751-1878, Washington, D.C., R.O. Polkinhorn,
1878.
3. Likely sources not yet investigated: D.C. Building Permits.

Prepared by Daniel D. Reiff
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
September, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- I. Architectural character: The Ray warehouse is composed of
a mid-nineteenth century structure and a somewhat later addition
to the east. The warehouse is of simple and utilitarian design,
similar to the majority of waterfront commercial buildings
nearby.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor. Alterations have been extensive. The infilling of eight windows, the removal of the second floor in both structures, and the poor maintenance of the buildings have left all but the north elevation in poor repair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Irregular shape (see sketch) with north-south walls at acute angles with north wall on K Street. Measures 64' 8" on north, 89' 0" on west. The structure is made up of two buildings, the Warehouse to the west (gable end to the street) and the Office to the east (flat roof sloping south). The office has two bays, and two stories; the warehouse 3 bays and 2 1/2 stories.
2. Foundations: Brick to grade.
3. Wall construction: The brick load bearing walls of common bond construction have irregular header courses which occur at the sixth, eighth and ninth rows. Some of the walls' thicknesses reduce as they rise. Except for the east side, all wall exteriors have the lower portions painted dark green and the upper cream colored. An irregular pilaster strip system occurs on the interior face of the west wall. Because the walls do not meet perpendicularly, wedge shaped openings appear at the corners of the north wall. The warehouse's east wall, 1' 5 1/2" thick, is shared by the office. Five and eight pointed star-shaped tie rod plates continue around the warehouse at the second floor level; nine on the west wall and two at the attic floor level on the north wall.
4. Framing: Brick load bearing walls support wood framing for the attic and roofs.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: A gable roofed hoist beam projects from the apex of the north gable of the warehouse parallel to the side walls (at an acute angle to K Street).
6. Chimneys: Two small corbeled brick flues begin at about six feet on the interior of the eastern wall of the office. Sealed circular openings near the base of the chimneys indicate that stoves were once connected.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A large modern roll up wooden door (added later) of 45 panels, part of which are glazed, is located in the north elevation of the warehouse with a wooden lintel and brick jamb. In the rear a large solid

sliding wooden door is under a concrete lintel. A double door, consisting of two, four light over three panel doors, is located at the second floor level on the north elevator. It has a flat brick arch with wooden jambs and sills. A six light over one panel door occupies the northwest corner of the office street facade. The opening is formed by a flat steel lintel. The door has wooden panels on each side. (It appears to have been enlarged from a narrower opening similar to the windows.)

- b. Windows and shutters: The office has brick segmental arches forming hood molds, and wooden sills. Six over six and two over two double hung heavy wooden sash windows on the north and east sides are accompanied by double panel fixed louver shutters, painted flat black. Above the office window are incised wooden panels under the arches. The warehouse windows have flat brick arches and brick sills. Small lunettes occupy the apex of each gable of the warehouse. The northern one has six triangular shaped lights and the southern one is closed with plywood. Below the southern lunette there are three rectangular openings of varying sizes with flat brick arches. They contain ten, six, and six lights. The east and west walls of the warehouse contain metal windows between wooden lintels and sills. One has ten and the other fifteen lights.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The warehouse has a north-south gable roof; the flat office roof slopes from north to south. The west slope of the gable is covered with slate and the east slope has asbestos shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves of the warehouse have two double rows of corbeled brick, and the gable ends have a double row along the edges. The rear (south) wall of the office is capped by a projected course and an ogee shaped metal gutter. Atop the front elevation (north) appears a cyma recta over cyma reversa pressed metal cornice which terminates at each end in a corbeled wooden bracket adorned with a fleur-de-lis. Three courses below the gutter appears a strip of canted vertical, dog-tooth, stretchers which stops near the edges.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The ridge of the warehouse roof is straddled by a rectangular skylight (which is concealed on the interior by a ceiling). At the apex of the north gable of the warehouse, there is a ridge projection which carried a hoist beam.

- C. Description of Interior: After alterations, all that remains of the interior is a brick shell with a concrete floor, and a fire proofed ceiling. A bit of heavy ceiling molding remains in the office. Both structures contain fluorescent lighting and hot air heating. The only interior door is a sliding wooden one over the segmental arched opening in the party wall. A row of cut off wooden floor joists is evident midway up the walls in the warehouse.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: At the southwest corner of the intersection of K and Potomac Streets, the Corson and Gruman Co. is enveloped in the noise and odors of a highly industrialized and well traveled area. The Whitehurst Freeway and heavy air traffic roar overhead while K Street and a spur of the B & O Railroad rumble in front. The noisome odors of nearby factories are much in evidence.
 2. Enclosures: Modern fencing encloses east and south edges of the lot.
 3. Outbuildings: a few storage buildings, but nothing of significance.
 4. Walks: To the north there is a concrete walk.

Prepared by William R. Gwin
Student Assistant Architect
National Park Service
September, 1967