

E. D. Sweeney Building
102 South Curry Street
Carson City
Nevada

HABS NO. NEV-13-6

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

E.D. SWEENEY BUILDING

Location: 102 South Curry Street (SW corner of South Curry and King Streets), Carson City, Nevada

Present Owner: Gary A. and Joann Sheerin

Present Occupant: Gary A. Sheerin (Attorney's Offices) and others

Present Use: Offices (2) on ground floor; apartments (2) on second floor

Statement of Significance: This is one of the earliest commercial buildings in Carson City, and one of the few brick buildings remaining from the city's earliest years. Located at what was an important intersection, the building has had a varied and interesting history of occupancy.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: circa 1860. The traditional date for this building is 1859. This would seem to be the earliest possible date which could be ascribed, inasmuch as Carson City was not platted until the fall of 1858, and the building conforms to the lot lines established in the plat.

The earliest deed found relating to the property was dated September 1863. Whether the building had been erected by then is not answered by the deed.

Stylistically, the structure could well date from 1860. Historically, the corner on which it was erected was at the very center of the young town and would undoubtedly have been one of the earliest to be built upon.

In a biographical sketch on E.D. Sweeney, Davis' History of Nevada states that he "built the first brick building in the city of Carson, wherein was situated the United States Land Register Post, and other Federal offices". Undoubtedly referring to the building in question, this statement would also lend credence to the early date generally ascribed to it. However from the title records, it seems as if Sweeney's first association with the property was in 1864, which, if he did construct it, would place the building several years later than its traditionally ascribed date.

2. Architect: none known
3. Original and subsequent owners:

This building is located on lot 1 of block 7 in Sears, Thompson, and Sears Division of Carson City. The following references to the title of the property are found in the Ormsby County, Nevada, deed books.

- 1863 Deed, September 7, 1863, recorded in Book 6, page 234. James E. Wood sold lot 1 of block 7 of Sears, Thompson, and Sears Division to George Eaton for \$1,800.
- 1864 Deed, February 6, 1864, recorded in Book 6, page 621. E. Wood and Lottie Wood his wife sold lot 1 of Block 7 to Edward Sweeney for \$800.00.
- 1878-1883 The property changed hands several times during these years, was mortgaged once, and was often sold in transactions involving several properties. Person-ages involved in the transactions were Matt Rinckel (Book 19, page 30), Sweeney (book 22 page 420) and John Egan (book 22 page 420).
- 1894 Deed November 5, 1894, recorded in Book 25, page 517. Lillian A. Dauchy, Administratrix of the estate of John F. Egan, deceased, deeded several of his properties to P. Manogue of Sacramento California for \$5.00. Among these was lot 1, Block 7 of Sears, Thompson, and Sears Division. P. Manogue was the Reverend Father Patrick Manogue, priest and builder of the well known church of St. Mary's in the Mountains in Virginia City, and later Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento. The details of his interest in Egan's property are given in Book 20, Page 549.
- 1898 Deed, July 18, 1898, recorded in Book 29, page 68. E.D. Sweeney bought from George Tyrell, Ormsby County treasurer and ex officio tax collector, several prop-erties to settle the estate of P. Monogue, on which there were delinquent taxes. The sale was on January 17, 1898, and among the several properties was "lot 1, Block 7, Sears, Thompson and Sears Division Brick Dwelling" assed at \$600. Sweeney paid \$248.51 for this and several other properties.

- 1913 Deed, February 17, 1913, recorded in Book 36, page 327, Sweeney deeded the lot to his wife.
- 1919 Deed, August 22, 1919, recorded in Book 37, page 125. W.T. King bought from Nellie Lammon, Administratrix of the estate of Mrs. E.D. Sweeney, deceased, lots 1, 9 and 10 of Block 7 for \$800.00.
- 1944 Deed, November 21, 1944, recorded in Book 51, page 29, Wesley L. Davis, Jr. and Mary Edith Davis bought from Emma L. King (widow) all of lot 1, Block 7.
- 1959 Deed, September 4, 1959, recorded in Book 81, page 494. Patricia Ann Howard bought from Wesley L. Davis Jr. and Mary Edith Davis, his wife, all of lot 1 of block 7.
- 1968 Deed, October 25, 1968, recorded in Official Records, Book 80, page 605. Gary A. Sheerin and Joann Sheerin husband and wife, bought lot 1 of block 7 from Patricia A. Wilkinson (who acquired title as Patricia Ann Howard).
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The following description of the building prior to its recent remodelling is based upon physical evidence in part, on copies of an 1875 and a 1925 photograph, copies of which are in the HABS collection, and on descriptions by the present owner and occupant, Mr. Gary Sheerin, Attorney.
- (1) Exterior. A one-story porch or gallery, to use the local term, extended along the north, east and south sides of the building, being five bays long on each side. The bevelled posts were square, the entablature thin and simple; above this there was a railing with pedestals and lattice-type infilling. The porch roof was a deck. An exterior stair in a single flight, along the east side, gave access to it from the sidewalk.
- (2) Plan. The interior contained, on the first story, a store in the eastern half, and probably another in the western half. A stair ascended on center from an entrance at the north, to the second floor.

- (3) Internal Structure: A longitudinal girder extended from north to south, to carry the second-floor joists. It was supported on timber columns with simple bolster capitals. The roof was carried on a similar girder at the second story. Adobe brick not much larger than ordinary brick were used to insulate the roof by filling in the spaces between ceiling and roof. The weight of this material eventually caused the framing to deflect, so it was removed during the recent remodelling. Mr. Sheerin has samples of these adobe bricks on display in his office.
5. Alterations and additions: The porch which once extended along the north and east sides has been removed. The exterior stairway has also been removed. The window on the first floor of the east front is a bay window which is not original to the building. It was formerly located on Thaxter's Drug Store and was installed here by Mr. Burd Lindsay in the 1920's. It served originally as a display window for the millinery shop operated by Mrs. Emma King. The building was purchased in 1968 by Mr. Gary Sheerin, who has since renovated the interior.
- B. Historical Events & Persons connected with the Structure:

E. D. Sweeney, who is said to have built this commercial structure, was born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1825. At an early age he came to Boston, and at age twenty-two went to South America, where he mined for two years. In 1849, he came to California, and in 1857 went on to Eagle Valley, the future site of Carson City. Sweeney remained in what was to become Carson City until his death at age eighty-seven. He was married to Ellen Cavanaugh in 1866. She was the daughter of Peter Cavanaugh, who later built the Nevada State Capitol. Sweeney apparently gave up his earlier interest in mining and concentrated his efforts in commercial ventures.

While the majority of historical accounts concerned with the early days of Carson City give Abe Curry (see HABS No. NEV-13-13) full credit for the establishment of the town, Davis' History of Nevada gives equal allegiance to Sweeney:

"Realizing the great beauty of Eagle Valley as the ideal site for the Capitol of the State, he bent his efforts toward staking out and establishing the City of Carson."

One of Sweeney's tangible efforts at promoting the growth of the city is the commercial building herein described. The

structure has served a variety of purposes over the years. It was apparently erected to have shops in the first floor and offices or apartments in the second. One of the earliest photographs of the building (dated circa 1868) shows it with three signs attached: U.S. Land Office, Edwards' Law Office, and one advertising "Groceries and Provisions."

The 1868-69 Directory gives the office address of "Edwards, T. D., Lawyer and agent C.P. Railroad" as Sweeney's Building. The 1871-72 Directory lists the following as occupants of the building:

Clayton and Davies, Attorneys at law, SW Corner King and Ormsby.

T.D. Edwards, Attorney and Councillor at law, has offices at SW corner King and Ormsby.

Foster, B. F., groceries and provisions, corner King and Ormsby. (The Carson City "Daily Appeal" of June 1, 1870 carried the following notice: "B. F. Foster (late with George T. Davis), groceries stand will open this morn in the brick store corner of King and Ormsby").

The building also served for a time as the Post Office. A notice in the Carson City "Daily Appeal" of February 28, 1875 states that "again the Post Office has been removed, this time to Sweeney's Building corner of King and Ormsby."

From 1919 to 1944, the building was the property of first Mr. W.T. King and later his widow, Mrs. Emma King. Mr. King was born in Genoa, Nevada in 1860 and died in Carson City in 1936. He was a printer and Justice of the Peace. Mrs. King had a millinery shop in the eastern portion of the first floor, resided in the western side, and rented rooms on the second floor.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Both the Nevada Historical Society in Reno and the Nevada State Museum in Carson City have several early photographs of the building.
2. Bibliography:

Davis, Sam. P., ed. The History of Nevada Reno: The Elms Publishing Co., 1913.

Storey, Ormsby, Washoe, and Lyon Counties Directory, 1871-72.
Sacramento: M.S. Crocker and Co.

Interview November 7, 1973 with Mr. Burd Lindsay of Carson City.

Prepared by: S. Allen Chambers, Jr.
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
December 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: Architectural Merit and Interest:
An early commercial building of a type once common in the region, representing a small number of survivors in Carson City; it has been considerably altered.
- Condition of fabric: Good; it has recently been remodeled inside and put in excellent repair.
- B. Detailed description of exterior:
1. Overall dimensions: approximately 33 ft. (4 bays) by 40 ft. (3 bays); two stories; rectangular.
 2. Walls: Structure - Exterior brick walls are 13 inches thick. They are now painted on the exterior and plastered on the interior.
 - a. Composition of north front. This is symmetrical, four bays wide. Four large segmental-arched openings are filled with wooden windows and doors. On the second story there are four segmental-arched windows; the lower third of these openings has been bricked in.
 - b. Composition of east front. This is three bays wide. A segmental-arched opening at the south end serves as an entrance. At the north end there is a bay window which was installed between 1875 and 1925 (then used to display hats for a millinery store). Two of the second-story windows have been reduced by bricking in the lower third of the openings.
 - c. Cornice. This appears to be substantially in its original form. There is a plain frieze four brick courses high, corbeled out slightly from the face of the wall. A

row of brick dentils is two courses high, above which there is a single course of bricks flush with the outer surface of the dentils. Above this there is another projecting course. There is a low parapet: three courses, one projecting course, and one recessed course. At the center of each facade there is a slightly higher parapet panel.

3. Roof: The roof is flat.

C. Interior at present:

There are two suites of offices on the ground floor, one occupying the eastern half, and the other the western half of the building. The second floor contains two apartments, one at the northern part of the building, and the other at the southern part.

D. Site and Surroundings:

This building occupies the southwest corner of King Street (on the north) and Curry Street (on the east); it is approached from both streets. The terrain is level. The area is now at the fringe of both Public (State and County) and commercial activity.

Prepared by: Harley J. McKee
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
Date of visit: August 18, 1972

PART III. Project Information

These records are part of the documentation made during the latter half of 1972 and the summer of 1973 in a project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Nevada State Park System to record structures in Carson City and nearby areas.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Eric R. Cronkhite, Administrator, Nevada State Park System, and Mrs. Marshall Humphreys of the Nevada Landmarks Society assisted the HABS recorders in Nevada. Professor Harley J. McKee, Supervisory Architect, National Park Service, selected the subjects and provided architectural data for the sixteen Carson City structures which were recorded. Historical documentation for these buildings was prepared by S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Architectural Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor for the 1973 Nevada Summer Team, which produced the measured drawings, was Robert L. Hartwig of Harvard University. Student assistant architects were John T. M. Creery (University

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of Utah), Robert P. Mizell (University of Florida), and Jack W. Schafer (University of Cincinnati). Photographs were made by Aaron A. Gallup of Sacramento, California.