

Leland Building
37-39 South Third Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1086

HABS
PA
SERIAL
267-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

LELAND BUILDING

HABS
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Address: 37-39 South Third Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Mrs. Henry Sanft, 7603 Brocklehurst Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Present Use: Dry goods manufacturing and stores.

Statement of Significance: A handsome mid-19th century solution to the architectural problem of the narrow commercial building front, five bays wide by five stories high.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>
4/16/1835	W. Patton et al Executors	Charles Leland
6/26/1901	John Harrison Trustee	Mary L. Butler wife of Robert G. Butler Alice E. Thorp Emily H. Thorp
4/12/1915	Mary Leland Butler Alice Elliot Thorp All est. right title & int.	Emily Leland Harrison
5/20/1915	Henry D. Whitfield Emily Harrison Thorp his wife all the right title	Emily Leland Harrison
11/24/1915	Frederic J. Stimson	Emily Leland Harrison
5/11/1920	Girard Trust Co. Catherine Norris Israel Cherkasy Harrison Patterson, John Hampton Barnes & James F. Hagen, Trustees under will of Emily L. Harrison dec'd	
6/1/1920	Israel Cherkasky & Yetta his wife 1/2 interest	Isaac Lewin

6/1/1920	"	Maxwell Pestcoe
3/7/1921	Maxwell Pestcoe Sallie his wife all 1/2 int.	Israel Cherkasky
1/11/1926	Israel Cherkasky	Maxwell Pestcoe 1/4 int.
5/22/1926	Isaac Levin Ida his wife	Samuel Lashner Sarah his wife
4/6/1927	Israel Cherkasky and Yetta his wife One Half Interest being 1/4 share	Isaac Levin
7/25/1929	Maxwell Pestcoe	Sallie Pestcoe
3/4/1930	Samuel Lashner and Sarah his wife and Isaac Levin and Ida his wife and Maxwell Pestcoe and Sallie his wife (Lots 123, 116, 117, 125, 119, 120, 121, 118, 122, 124).	The Bank Street Realty Co. all interest
7/10/1939	The Bank Street Realty Co.	The Phila. Saving Fund Soc.
8/10/1944	The Phila. Saving Fund Society	Henry Sanft and Sarah, his wife

(Information from Records of Deeds Office, City Hall,
Philadelphia, Penna. Lot number L S2-116).

2. Date of erection: 1855.
3. Architect: Stephen D. Button (1803-97).
4. Builders: Killgore and Hudders, builders, were the "carpenters;"
S. K. Hoxie, mason, was responsible for the granite front.
5. Original plans, construction: The structure was one of a complex of buildings around a central basement court with separate structures on South Third Street, Chestnut Street, and Bank Street, all owned and built for Charles Leland. The first floor had three separate doorways on South Third Street. One doorway was for the store in the north portion of the first floor. A central

doorway led to a vestibule which contained direct flights of steps up to the second and third stories. A third doorway led to a store in the south portion of the building symmetrical with the north portion. A small stairway in the rear ell led from the third to the fourth and fifth floors.

6. Notes on alterations and additions: An electric elevator was added off the central vestibule in the early twentieth century and the left hoist on the center south wall from sub-basement to basement was removed. Two steel tie bars (north to south) were added to support the fifth floor and a wide-flange beam (north to south) approximately 18" deep supports the middle of the fourth floor. The original first-floor front doors were removed within the last two years. A minor fire in the second floor c. 1959 caused the replacement of flooring and ceiling in a small area of the south portion of the building.
7. Important old views: None known.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Charles Leland purchased the Old Congress Hall Hotel property, on Third Street above Chestnut, in 1835. Twenty years later the Philadelphia Public Ledger was to report on July 31 under "Local Affairs":

"More Improvements--The vicinity of Third and Chestnut streets, within a period of six years, has been improved with more substantial and costly buildings than perhaps any other portion of Philadelphia. From Second to Fourth in Chestnut and [f]rom Dock to Market in Third, the improvements have entirely changed the appearance of the neighborhood, and instead of long rows of low and dilapidated two and three story buildings, we see huge piles of granite, iron, marble, and brown stone, adorned in the handsomest styles of architecture. The last valuable improvement is now being completed on the site of Old Congress Hall, on Third street, for Mr. Chas. Leland, Jr. I[t] is an imposing structure, and like the Chestnut street store, erected and owned by the same gentleman, it bears upon its front all the evidences of neatness, taste, and durability. There are other improvements in contemplation for the same vicinity, which are to be commenced in a few days, under the auspices of Col. S. K. Hoxie, the granite worker, and Messrs. Killgore & Hudders, builders, who were intrusted [sic] with the construction of Mr. Leland's other stores. The new buildings will front on Bank street, extending from Elbow lane, South, 91-1/2 feet, and be 4 stories high, with basement and sub cellars[.] Two of the stores will be 117 feet, and the others 82 feet. These edifices are to be finished in the same manner as the Chestnut and Third street stores, and when completed,

a hollow square will be formed in the rear, and afford plenty of light during the day."

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Leland Building, 39 South Third Street, Philadelphia. Personal interview with John Johnson, janitor for many years of the complex of buildings of which the Leland Building is a part.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Public Ledger (Philadelphia). January 12, May 16, May 24, 1855, p. 1; July 31, 1855, p. 2.

Webster, Richard J. "Stephen D. Button: Italianate Stylist." Unpublished thesis "submitted to the faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts," June 1963.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A fine commercial structure which functions as part of a several-building complex, and has a notable Quincy granite facade.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories and bays, over-all dimensions, layout: Five stories (77' high) plus basement and sub-basement; five-bay front approximately 34' wide; 80' to 83' deep; L-shaped plan.
2. Foundations: Granite rubble set in mortar.
3. Wall construction: Granite front (west facade); common (header bond) red brick (north, east, and south walls).
4. Bulkheads: 10' x 8' bulkhead now covered by concrete walk on South Third Street extends down to sub-basement.
5. Balconies: First- and second-floor east facade (rear) metal plank balconies approximately 3' wide on cast-iron brackets have reticulate metalwork railings decorated with cast-iron flower motifs.

6. Chimneys: Brick with concrete covering.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The three original double wooden doors in the west (front) facade were approximately 9' high. Each individual door had a large ornate circular patera with sunken rectangular panels at top and bottom. The HABS photographs taken in January 1963 indicate the decorative details of these original doors. Sometime between January 1963 and the time of this written report (August 1964) these doors were covered with plywood. A straight lintel with acanthus molding was topped by a round-arched overlight divided by molded semicircles and drop-shaped center light. Half-round granite moldings arch from six split bud corbel blocks across the tops of the three doorways and two store-front windows.

b. Windows and shutters: West (front) facade--first floor: One one-light store front window and one double-hung sash which is a replacement; both windows have wooden surrounds similar to doorways.

East elevation--sub-basement and basement: Six-over-six lights, wooden double-hung sash.

East elevation--first floor: Six-over-nine lights, wooden double-hung sash.

Second and fifth floors: Six-over-six lights, double-hung sash. All windows on east facade from sub-basement to fifth floor have 1/8" metal plate shutters with metal reinforcing frame 2" from edge and riveted to plate.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Tar and gravel roof slopes down from west to east.

b. Cornice: West (main) facade has a granite cornice on granite brackets and is crowned by a granite name block which is inscribed with "Leland 1855" and flanked by granite scrolls and topped by a granite antefix. Stele-type blocks with sunken anthemions are placed at north and south ends of cornice. East elevation has a brick cornice on brick corbels.

c. Skylight: Skylight, approximately 8' square (possibly a later addition), is located in center of roof.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans; sub-basement: L-shaped with large rectangular portion divided by masonry partition with nearly square area to the west and larger rectangle to the east. The west portion has an opening for the bulkhead under present sidewalk pavement. Two cast-iron columns having cross sections of four parts at right angles and with simplified Corinthian capitals are spaced along the east-west center line of the west portion. Three windows in east facade open to light-wall in rear court. Wooden stairway in the southeast extension of ell leads up to basement.

Basement: L-shaped space divided by later partitions. Four windows and door in fourth bay from north leads to cobblestone court.

First floor: L-shaped space; two bays on north is one store, one central bay contains entry vestibule and stairs in direct flight to second floor, and two bays to south is one store. One large wooden door in the middle interior wall of each store formerly led to the entry vestibule. Each store had a large vault in the rear portion.

Second and third floors: L-shaped spaces with central stairway in direct flights. Vault in second floor, southeast extension of ell. Third floor extension contains small enclosed stairs to fourth and fifth floors.

Fourth and fifth floors: L-shaped spaces with one large rectangular space perhaps formerly partitioned and extension containing small wooden stairway. Skylight in rear center of fifth-floor ceiling.

2. Flooring: Sub-basement has brick flooring; basement through fifth floor have narrow oak flooring.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Sub-basement has rubble walls set in mortar and whitewashed; basement has plaster walls and ceiling; first floor has plaster walls with molded plaster cornice and plaster ceiling; second to fifth floors have plaster walls and sheet-metal panel ceilings and cornices.
4. Heating: Steam heat from furnace in sub-basement of Bank Street building furnished by main pipe at basement level to large tube radiators.

D. Site

1. Orientation: Main structure runs east to west with small extension at southeast corner which runs south.
2. Enclosures: At the rear of the Leland Building is an enclosed cobblestone court at basement level which has a ramped drive extending eastward under the Bank Street buildings up to Bank Street (which is parallel to Third Street and extends north from Chestnut).

Prepared by William B. Bassett
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
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