

Commercial Building ^{at}
67 and 69 Government Street
Mobile, Alabama

HABS No. ALA-67

HABS
ALA,
49-MOBI,
64-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT NO. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Auburn, Alabama

COMMERCIAL BUILDING.
67 & 69 Government Street.
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.

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HABS
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49-MOBI,
64-

Ownership:

Present Owner: J. W. Olensky. January 4, 1917 to present time.

Previous Owners: Henry Hitchcock. April 10, 1836.
Farmers Loan and Trust Co. Sept. 1, 1836.
Henry Hitchcock. May 23, 1838.
Joseph Coworthwaite. Feb. 8, 1840.
James Dundas. Sept. 8, 1841.
John A. Campbell. April 24, 1842.
Samuel St. John. January 25, 1849.
Augustus Brooks. Dec. 20, 1855.
John Lawrence Lavretta. June 30, 1860.
Geovannie Lawrence Lavretta. Feb. 28, 1894.
Constantine Lavretta. March 24, 1896.

Date of Erection: 1836 - 1837.

Architect: Unknown. Possibly Charles Dakin, James Gallier

Builder: Henry Hitchcock.

Present Condition: Fair.

Number of Stories: Three.

Materials of Construction: Brick masonry; one of several interesting three story types existing in New Orleans and Charleston. Interior of plaster with wood trim.

Other Existing Records:

See: Hamiltons - "COLONIAL HOMES - MOBILE OF THE FIVE FLAGS."

Compiled by: Katherine Floyd, Auburn, Ala.

Approved: E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer, HABS
3/17/1937

T.T.W. 8/4/37

Additional Data: First settlement of Mobile was made by the French at what is now called twenty seven mile bluff on Mobile River. In 1711 the colony was moved to the present location of the city, where Fort Conde, later called Fort Charlotte, was built. The building now at 67 & 69 Government Street stands upon a lot which was a part of the site of Fort Conde, in a square bounded by Royal, Government, Water and Church Streets.

Shortly after this territory was taken over by the United States in 1814, Congress ordered the demolition of the old fort and the ground was cut up into lots and sold at a public sale in October 1820, most of the lots going to the Mobile Lot Company which was organized expressly to buy up the lots. By 1835 George E. Holt had acquired all the lots except three, one of which was owned by Henry Hitchcock. Holt sold his holdings together with cotton press and warehouses to the Mobile Steam Cotton Press and Building Co. March 2, 1835. and on the same day Hitchcock disposed of his lot to the same company. Records of these sales in the Probate Court of Mobile County show that Henry Hitchcock was president of this cotton press and building company. Between 1835 - 1836, this company acquired the other two parcels of the land and then on April 10, 1836 sold the entire site together with cotton press and etc. to Henry Hitchcock and shortly thereafter he built the structure at what is now 67 & 69 Government Street.

For more than 45 years the Lavrettas operated a "Coffee Saloon" which occupied the entire first story, and here gathered all politically minded citizens to discuss and plan the political activity of the period. It is said that in this restaurant, much of Mobile's history was written over steaming cups of coffee for which the place was famous.

The upper stories of this building are divided into two dwelling apartments, each with rear extensions or servant quarters. For fifteen years it has stood vacant but is still a subject for discussion among old citizens, and many are the stories told of its old days.

Source of Material: Edward W. Russell.
Mobile, Alabama.
Records of Probate Court of Mobile.
Mobile, Alabama.