

**PPS RECORDS FOR  
32 WILLOW STREET  
PLAT 36, LOT 325**

**Previous addresses:  
8 Willow Court (Plat 36, Lot 20), 1892-1899  
8 Wise Court (Plat 36, Lot 20, later Lot 310), 1900-1977  
8 Carol Court, 1978- 2009**

**GEORGE N. AND ELIZABETH A. CUMMINGS HOUSE  
Built 1872  
Renovated 1890-1891**

**DESIGNATIONS**

This house, with the address 8 Wise Court, is a contributing building within the Broadway-Armory Historic District (listed on the National Register of Historic Places); it is identified in the inventory as "House, ca. 1890."

The house is also located within the Armory Historic District overlay zone, a local historic district designated by the City of Providence.

**NOTES**

*Construction Date and Historic Name*

Records are not entirely consistent about the construction date of this house.

The NR nomination gives the date of this house as ca. 1890. Maps and directories bear this out: the original address of this house, 8 Willow Court, first appears in the 1892 city directory, and the house first appears on the 1895 city atlas. Its exterior architectural character also appears to be consistent with that time frame.

However, a different building is illustrated in approximately this same location on the 1875 and 1882 atlases. This was an outbuilding (possibly a carriage house or barn) behind an 1872 house that formerly stood very close to Willow Street on this lot. Building permits dated 1890 and 1891 state that the property owner, George N. Cummings, intended to alter an existing building at the back of the lot for use as a single-family house. While this was presumably a fairly substantial renovation (the building's footprint changed somewhat between the 1882 and 1895 maps), a notation in the tax records that a building was "added" on this lot in 1891 appears to be an error. Thus, the date chosen for the PPS Marker is "1872, renovated 1890-91." Perhaps physical evidence in the house itself may shed further light on the documentary evidence.

Elizabeth A. Cummings, wife of George N. Cummings, owned the property when the original house and outbuilding were built in 1872 (although the couple did not live here at the time), and George N. Cummings owned the property when the outbuilding was renovated to become a single-family house. Therefore, both their names go on the marker.

### *Occupancy*

This house was initially used as rental property. At the time the outbuilding was renovated for residential use, George N. Cummings lived in the “front house” on the lot.

### *Changes of Address and Lot Number*

As noted above, this house has had four changes of address and three changes in lot number since 1892. Records cited in this report relate mostly to the previous addresses and lot numbers.

Address Changes. The address “32 Willow Street” (later, 30-32 Willow) applied to the original house at the front (north) end of this lot, which stood there from 1872 until it was demolished in 1989 or 1990.

The present house known as 32 Willow, which formerly stood behind that earlier house at the back end of the same lot, was known successively as 8 Willow Court, 8 Wise Court, and 8 Carol Court until 2005. According to city directories, from 2006-2010 the house had two addresses, 32 Willow Street and 8 Carol Court; it was listed only as 32 Willow Street as of 2010.

Lot Number Changes. From 1854 until 1951 the tax assessor identified this property as Plat 36, Lot 20. By 1892 Lot 20 had two houses standing on it, one behind the other. In 1952, Lot 20 was subdivided; the back house (presently, 32 Willow) then stood on Lot 310, while the front house (formerly, 32 Willow) remained on Lot 20. In 1995, after the front house had been demolished, the two lots were merged again, into Lot 325.

**RECORDS** *(All Records were found in Providence City Hall unless otherwise noted).*

### **Assessor’s Plat Maps and Chain of Title Cards (Assessor’s Office)**

The map for Assessor’s Plat 36 identifies 32 Willow Street as Lot 325, located at the southeast corner of Willow Street and Carol Court. The lot has 40.45 feet of frontage on Willow and 100 feet on Carol, for a total of 4,045 sq.ft.

Lot 325 was created in 1995 by the merger of Lots 20 and 310, which were subsequently dropped.

Chain of title card for AP 36, Lot 20 – WILLOW ST & WISE CT

*Note: the electronic, scanned version of this card contains numerous illegible characters and unexplained additional notes.*

George N. Cummings owned the property as of [date illegible – last 2 digits are “78”].

George N. Cummings Heirs owned the property as of June 2, 1902.

Eugene D. Cummings owned the property as of January 1, 1903. (Note after this date: “EC52.”)

Ernest J. Cormier and wife Catherine J. Cormier owned the property as of January 2, 1915. (A partially illegible date follows: “\_\_/22/\_\_.”)

Henry Martel owned the property as of “1 M. 1917.”

Giovanni Scampoli owned the property as of January 1, 1922. (A partially illegible date follows: “6/71.”)

Giovanni Scampoli [alternative spelling?] owned the property as of June 15, 1932.

Giovanni Scampoli Estate owned the property as of April 1944. (A partially illegible date follows: “6/76.”)

John R. Scampoli and wife “\_\_oretta” [Loretta?] H. Scampoli owned the property as of January 1950.

Donald H. Anderton and wife Elsie G. Anderton owned the property as of June 28, 1984. Refers to Deed Book 1265/Page 958.

Jay S. Moore and Eric Yeghian owned the property as of November 19, 1984; refers to DB 1277/329.

Dean Street Development owned the property as of December 17, 1985; refers to DB 1319/359.

William F. Lemoine owned the property as of March 5, 1987; refers to DB 1541/183.

James Ajootian (tax sale) owned the property as of April 23, 1990; refers to DB 2224/119.

Zeus Realty Company (ND) owned the property as of November 30, 1993; refers to DB 2859/253.

[Several of the entries from the late 1980s and early 1990s have handwritten asterisks next to the owner names; the following notes are on the back of this card:

“\*DB2590/334 7/21/92 (PWSB)”

“City Collector of Prov Tax Sale TRC 5/12/94”

“\*City of Providence Tax Sale DB 2971/197 rec 6/22/94”

“[handwritten]\*DB 3228/334 (red) 11/9/95”]

Kari N. Lang owned the property as of November 3, 1995; refers to DB 3226/069.

Chain of title card for AP 36, Lot 310 – WISE COURT

Philip Storti and wife Alba Storti owned the property as of November 1951.

Daniel A. Rogers, Jr. and wife Jeanette M. Rogers owned the property as of December 1957.

Salina M. Brennan owned the property as of December 1961. [“Salina” is probably a typo, as other records give her name as “Sabina.”]

Sabina M. Brennan and Charles B. Brennan owned the property as of December 1962.

Charles B. Brennan owned the property as of December 31, 1988. (Note on the card: "D. Rec. REM 79/170.")

Kari N. Lang owned the property as of November 3, 1995. Refers to Deed Book 3226/Page 070.

#### Chain of title card for AP 36, Lot 325 – WILLOW STREET

Kari N. Lang owned the property as of 12/95. (Note on the card: "Lots 20 and 310 have been merged into new lot #325 per owner's letter of request (11/7/95) SLG #2857.")

According to the Assessor's computerized data base, the current owner (since November 1995) is Kari N. Lang.

#### **Maps and Atlases (Archives and Registry of Deeds)**

*Maps indicate that a fairly large wooden outbuilding was standing on the site of this house (behind another house that no longer exists) by 1875. The house itself is first seen on the 1895 map.*

**1857:** "Map of Providence, R.I." by H.F. Walling, shows the future site of 32 Willow Street within a large lot owned by Josiah Chapin. Willow Street did not exist at this time. (*Archives*)

**1871:** "Plat of Lots Belonging to Rufus Waterman, Being a Portion of the Nathan and Rufus Waterman Plat recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 5, replatted by C.E. Paine, July 1871. (Recorded on Plat Card 180.) This map shows Willow Street laid out west of Parade Street. A short distance west of Parade, on the south side of Willow, is an unnamed, short, narrow, dead-end side street surrounded by 8 numbered house lots. Lot #7, measuring 40.45 feet on Willow and 100 feet on the side street (now Carol Court), is at the northeast corner of that intersection. (*Registry of Deeds*)

**1875:** "City Atlas of Providence," Vol. 2, by G.M. Hopkins, Plate L, shows Willow Street laid out on the west side of Parade Street, with numerous houses already constructed. Several unnamed, short, narrow, dead-end side streets now extend southward from and perpendicular to Willow. The second of these side streets west of Parade Street is today's Carol Court. A house lot at the northeast corner of Willow and that side street is occupied by a wood-frame house standing close to Willow Street, with the address 22 Willow. Behind it is a fairly large wooden outbuilding, which occupies the location of the present house at 32 Willow. The lot measures 4,045 sq.ft. The owner's name is not indicated. (*Archives*)

**1882:** “Atlas of the City of Providence, R.I. and Environs,” by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 15, shows virtually the same conditions as on the 1875 map; the outbuilding behind the house numbered 22 Willow now has had a tiny addition tacked on to its southeast corner. The side street is not named. The lot size and owner name are not indicated. *(Archives)*

**1895:** “Atlas of the City of Providence” by Everts & Richards, Plate 10, Page 48, shows that the house at the front of the lot has been renumbered 32 Willow. Behind it is now another wood-frame house, which does not have its own address. (The house has a slightly smaller footprint, and stands slightly further away from the rear lot line, than the previous outbuilding.) The side street is now named Willow Court. The lot size is 4,045 sq.ft. The owner’s name is not indicated. *(Archives)*

**1908:** “Atlas of the City of Providence” by L.J. Richards Co., Plate 15, shows two houses on this lot. The front house address is 32 Willow; the back house’s address is not indicated. Willow Court has been renamed Wise Court. (Almost all of the lots abutting Wise Court have houses on them, but none of their street addresses are indicated.) The lot size is 4,000 sq.ft. The owner is E.D. Cummings. *(Archives)*

**1918:** “Atlas of the City of Providence” by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 7, shows two houses on this lot. The front house address is now 30 Willow; the back house address is 8 Wise Court. The lot size is 4,000 sq.ft. The owner is E.J. Cormier. The map refers to the Rufus Waterman Plat. *(Archives)*

**1926:** “Atlas of the City of Providence” by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 7, shows two houses on this lot. The front house address is still 30 Willow; the back house address is 8 Wise Court. The lot size is 4,045 sq.ft. The owner is G. Scampoli. The map refers to the Rufus Waterman Plat on Plat Card 180. *(Archives)*

**1937:** “Atlas of the City of Providence” by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 7, shows two houses on this lot. The front house address is now 30-32 Willow; the back house address is 8 Wise Court. The lot size is 4,045 sq.ft. The owner is G. Scampoli [alternate spelling]. The map refers to the Rufus Waterman Plat on Plat Card 180. *(Archives)*

**1956:** “Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map, Vol. 4, Page 63 shows two houses on this lot. The front house address is 30-32 Willow; it is wood-frame, 2-1/2 stories tall. The back house address is 8 Wise Court; it is wood-frame, 1-1/2 stories tall. The owner name and lot size are not indicated. *(Archives)*

*Assessor’s Plat Maps for Plat 36 (all at Archives)*

**1951:** Lot 20 measures 4,045 sq.ft.

**1952:** Lot 20 has been subdivided into 2 lots. Lot 20 is now 2,872 sq.ft (40.45 feet on Willow Street, 71 feet deep). Lot 310 (behind Lot 20) is now 1,173 sq.ft. (40.45 feet wide by 29 feet on Wise Court). No street addresses are indicated.

**1994:** Lot 20 now has the address 32 Willow Street, while Lot 310 now has the address 8 Carol Court. (Wise Court has been renamed.) Both lots have the same dimensions as in 1952.

**1995:** Lot 325, with the address 32 Willow Street, has been created from the merger of Lots 20 and 310, measuring 4,045 sq.ft. (40.45 feet on Willow Street, 100 feet on Carol Court).

### **Tax Records (Archives)**

*Prior to 1854, Providence tax records only identified the name of the taxpayer and the amount of tax paid – not the location of the taxable property, or whether it was real estate or personal property. In 1854 the City of Providence Tax Assessor began using a system of plats and lots to identify individual parcels of real estate (although they did not indicate how many buildings were on any given lot, or distinguish between primary buildings and outbuildings, until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Tax records from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are indexed by plat number, and recorded in a series of ledgers labeled “A” through “E.”*

*Tax records indicate that at least one building was standing on Plat 36, Lot 20 as of August 31, 1872, when the property was owned by Elizabeth A. Cummings; and that a building was added to the lot in 1891-1892, when it was owned by George N. Cummings.*

Ledger B5/418 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by Rufus Waterman – 11,592 sq.ft.  
 May 1, 1871 – value of land \$1,391; value of buildings \$0  
 November 1, 1871 – transferred to Rufus Waterman

Ledger B5/419 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by Rufus Waterman – 4,045 sq.ft.  
 [note: the original lot was subdivided]  
 November 1, 1871 – value of land \$809; value of buildings \$0  
 May 1, 1872 – transferred to Henry E. Kendall, DB 198/324

Ledger B3/185 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by Henry E. Kendall – 4,045 sq.ft.  
 May 1, 1872 – value of land \$809; value of buildings \$0 [the figure \$3,000 is written here in pencil]  
 August 31, 1872 – transferred to Elizabeth A. Cummings, wife of George N. Cummings, DB 238/112

Ledger B2/16 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by Elizabeth A. Cummings – 4,045 sq.ft.  
 August 31, 1872 – value of land \$809; value of buildings \$3,000  
 [This \$3,000 apparently refers both to the original house at the front of the lot and to the outbuilding behind it (both shown on the 1875 atlas), because the value of buildings did not change until 1891.]

Ledger C6/235 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by Alfred Stone, baker – 4,045 sq.ft.  
December 1, 1874 – value of land \$809; value of buildings \$3,000  
February 1, 1878 – transferred to George N. Cummings, DB 297/281 and  
298/079.

Ledger C2/255 – Plat 26, Lot 20 – owned by George N. Cummings and wife – 4,045 sf.  
February 1, 1878 – value of land \$809; value of buildings \$3,000

Ledger D3/77 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by George N. Cummings – 4,045 sq.ft.  
March 1, 1887 – value of land \$1,092; value of buildings \$3,000

Ledger E3/232 – Plat 36, Lot 20 – owned by George N. Cummings - 4,045 sq.ft.  
January 1, 1889 – value of land \$1,092; value of buildings \$3,000; “See below –  
building added.”  
May 1, 1891 – value of land \$1,092; value of buildings \$3,100; “See below –  
building added.”  
June 1, 1893 – value of land \$1,092; value of buildings \$3,700  
[Note: this \$700 increase in the value of buildings is consistent with the  
estimated costs noted in the Intent to Build Records, below.]

### **Intent to Build Records (Archives)**

*These records are provided in two sets of books: one indexed by the property owner’s last name, and one indexed by street name.*

#### **Indexed by Owner Name (Volume dated 1890-1891)**

Permit #6592-281, dated April 28, 1890: “G.N. Cummings of Greenwich Road intends to make alterations in a wood dwelling on the east side of Willow Court near Willow Street; estimated cost \$600; builder H.B.B.”

Permit #7763-602, dated September 12, 1891: “Geo. Cummings of 32 Willow Street intends to make alterations in a wood ten. [tenement] dwelling on rear 32 Willow Street; estimated cost \$300.”

#### **Indexed by Street (Box 4: July 29, 1889-January 14, 1892)**

Permit #7763, dated September 12, 1891: “G.N. Cummings per E.D. Cummings. Intention to make alt[erations] in wood building to be located in rear 32 Willow Street on estate owned by George N. Cummings. Said building to be used for 1 tenement and is to be built by Sweet. Estimated cost \$[blank].”

[Permit #6592 not found in this ledger.]

**Deeds (Registry of Deeds, unless otherwise noted)**

*Deeds do not mention any buildings on the property until Alfred Stone purchased the property from George N. and Elizabeth A. Cummings in 1874 (although tax records indicate that buildings valued at \$3,000 were standing on the property as of 1872, when Mrs. Cummings owned the property). In 1878 Stone defaulted on his mortgage, and George N. Cummings bought the property back. He still owned it when the outbuilding at the back of the lot was renovated as a dwelling in 1891-1892.*

Deed Book 198/Page 324: On April 19, 1872, Rufus Waterman of Providence sold to Henry E. Kendall of Providence, for \$1, a lot of land on the westerly side of Providence, being Lot #7 on A Plat of Building Lots Belonging to Rufus Waterman, drawn by Charles E. Paine, July 1871, recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 57. [No mention of any buildings in this deed.] (*Archives*)

DB 238/112: On August 21, 1872, Henry E. Kendall of Providence sold to Elizabeth A. Cummings, wife of George N. Cummings of Providence, for \$25, a lot of land with improvements, being Lot #7 in the Rufus Waterman Plat of 1871. References Kendall's deed from Rufus Waterman of April 19, 1872, DB 198/324. [No mention of any buildings in this deed.]

DB 250/228: On December 1, 1874, George N. Cummings and his wife Elizabeth A. Cummings, in her right, of Providence, sold to Alfred Stone of Providence, for \$100, a lot of land with improvements on the southeast corner of Willow Street and a 20-foot gangway, being Lot #7 in the Rufus Waterman Plat of 1871. References Elizabeth Cumming's deed from Henry E. Kendall, DB 238/112. [No mention of any buildings in this deed.]

DB 297/281: On January 29, 1878, Elizabeth A. Cummings (holder of a mortgage to Alfred and Lydia Stone, on which the Stones had defaulted)), transferred title on the Stones' property to Hezekiah P. Brown of Providence, who had been the highest bidder (at \$6,300) at a public auction of the defaulted mortgage. The property was a lot of land with buildings and improvements on the southeast corner of Willow Street and a 20-foot gangway, being Lot #7 in the Rufus Waterman Plat of 1871, containing 4,045 sq.ft. References Alfred Stone's deed from George N. Cummings and wife by deed dated December 1, 1874 [DB 250/228].

DB 298/079: On January 29, 1878, Hezekiah P. Brown of Providence sold to George N. Cummings of Providence, for \$1,000, a lot of land with buildings and improvements on the southeast corner of Willow Street and a 20-foot gangway, being Lot #7 in the Rufus Waterman Plat of 1871, containing 4,045 sq.ft.

DB 550/027: On November 20, 1914, Eugene D. Cummings of East Providence sold to Ernest J. Cormier and wife Catherine J. Cormier of Providence, for \$100, a lot of land with buildings and improvements, bounding north on Willow Street (on which it

measured 40.45 feet) and bounding west on Wise Court (on which it measured 100 feet).

[Note: Eugene D. Cummings apparently inherited George N. Cummings's property following George's death in 1902 (aged 78). Both men are listed in Providence City Directories for many years as opticians working at 36 Dorrance Street, so Eugene was likely either George's brother or his son. George was originally a partner in the optician business, but Eugene later took it over. Eugene also briefly lived in the original "front" house at 32 Willow Street, in 1873 and again after George's death.]

### **Directories (Archives)**

*The house first appears in city directories in 1892, with the address 8 Willow Court, occupied by James F. Potter, a tenant. The house's owner, George N. Cummings never lived here; he resided, at times, in the "front house" on this lot, as well as in several other locations, during the 2+ decades he owned this property. The front house became a two-family in 1899.)*

Providence City Directories were published beginning in 1850. For the first 4 decades, these volumes contained a street directory (listing the names and locations of all existing streets), and an alphabetical listing of residents and businesses. Residents' professions and business addresses (if any) were noted before home addresses. From 1892-1894, and again after 1937, city directories also included a section listing residential buildings by street address. The notation "(h)" indicates "home" or "head of household" while "(b)" indicates a boarder.

- 1890 Cummings, George N. (Eugene D. Cummings & Co. [opticians], 36 Dorrance St., (h) at East Greenwich
- 1891 Cummings, George N. (Eugene D. Cummings & Co. [opticians], 36 Dorrance St., (h) 22 Willow Street
- 1892 8 Willow Court (1<sup>st</sup> listing) – Potter, James F., toolmaker (h) [not listed in 1891]  
22 Willow Street – Cummings, George N. (h)
- 1893 8 Willow Court – Bennett, George, patternmaker (h)  
32 Willow Street [address changed] – Cummings, George N. (h) and four other residents
- 1894 8 Willow Court – Bennett, George, patternmaker (h)  
32 Willow Street [address changed] – Cummings, George N. (h) and two other residents

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- 1977            8 Wise Court – Mrs. Sabina M. Brennan
- 1978            8 Carol Court [street name changed] – Mrs. Sabina M. Brennan [
- 1988            30 and 32 Willow Street – vacant  
8 Carol Court – Charles B. Brennan

[No 1989 directory at Archives.]

- 1990            30 and 32 Willow Street not listed [demolished]  
8 Carol Court – Charles B. Brennan
- 1996            8 Carol Court – Kari Lang
- 2006-2009    8 Carol Court and 32 Willow Street – Kari Lang
- 2010            8 Carol Court not listed  
32 Willow Street – John J. and Kari [Lang] Mora

Providence House Directories were published separately from the City Directory, 1895-1937 (published biannually from 1901) and list all residential buildings by street address. This directory is typically a year behind the city directory.

- 1895            8 Willow Court – Bennett, George, patternmaker (h)  
32 Willow Street – Cummings, George N. and 2 others (h)
- 1899            8 Willow Court – Bennett, George, patternmaker  
30 Willow Street (1<sup>st</sup> listing) – Barton, Frank T., Mr. and Mrs. (h); also  
Estes, Albert C., Jr., draftsman (b)  
32 Willow Street – Cummings, George N.; also Davenport, Hortense M.  
Mrs. (h)
- 1900            8 Wise Court [street name changed] – Bennett, George, patternmaker (h)  
30 Willow Street – Barton, Frank T., Mr. and Mrs. (h)  
32 Willow Street – Cummings, George N, Mr. and Mrs. (h)

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