

**ROTHWELL'S WASHINGTON**  
**by Timothy Hauser**  
**May 2020**

**Washington in 1860**

Pre-Civil War Washington was still a tentative undertaking given the shaky commitment of the federal government to the city as the nation's capital, but the city population was growing fast with immigration primarily from Ireland and Germany as well as the growing influx of free African Americans from the slave states. The new arrivals were both skilled and unskilled drawn in large part by ongoing federally funded construction campaigns. Projects included the Smithsonian Institution (1847), the Washington Monument (1848), a home for disabled soldiers and an insane asylum on Capitol Hill (1852), and an armory and military museum (1855).

The City Directory lists Washington's population in 1852 at 49,339 people. Wards 5 and 6 (most of Capitol Hill) were the two least populated wards, accounting for 4,287 and 4,292 inhabitants respectively, or roughly 18 percent of the entire city population. By far the largest concentration of people, houses and businesses lay north of Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the Capitol.

Two thirds of the city's housing stock consisted of two story wood frame dwellings and only 40 miles of brick pavement (rough cobble) had been laid. This was largely unlighted (gas mains were extremely limited) with few sidewalks, if any. There was no running water (except from public pumps and private wells) and no sewers or indoor plumbing.

The Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ended at the Railroad Station on "C" Street and New Jersey Avenue just north of the Capitol, and would not cross the Potomac into Virginia until after the Civil War. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal crossed the Potomac on the Aqueduct and proceeded as the Washington and Alexandria Canal to Alexandria. The Washington Canal connected the relatively deep water port on the Eastern Branch to Tiber Creek and the Potomac along the current course of Constitution Avenue and the Mall. Washington was connected by steamer from the Seventh and Twelfth Street Wharves in Southwest Washington to Alexandria. In addition to the Long Bridge which crossed the Potomac at Fourteenth Street and Maryland Ave., there were two bridges spanning the Eastern Branch (Anacostia) at Eleventh Street, the so-called Navy Yard Bridge connecting with Uniontown, and at Pennsylvania Ave. Central Market occupied the current site of the National Archives, feeding a network of neighborhood groceries, many of which survive to this day.

By 1860 the city population had grown to approximately 70,000, including Georgetown, but public and private infrastructure remained rudimentary. Still a sleepy city by 1860, the Civil War would usher in a new era of population growth, economic expansion, and urban development around a growing federal core of public buildings. (Personal account of life in Washington in 1860 from Historical Society.)

## **Building a Federal City**

As the federal capital, Washington in 1860 remained “ungainly and most unsatisfactory” in Anthony Trollope’s opinion. There were few public buildings: the White House, the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the War Department (Winder Building), the Patent Building (National Portrait Gallery), Treasury, Post Office (Tariff Commission), City Hall (D.C. Courthouse), the Smithsonian, the National Observatory (Naval Observatory), the Arsenal (Ft. McNair), and the Navy Yard and Marine Barracks and Commandant’s House on Capitol Hill, – all surviving to this day – and many of these were under restoration or expansion.

Indeed, large federal building projects provided an important employment engine and magnet for the waves of immigration from the British Isles and Central Europe at mid century. In particular, Richard Rothwell and his neighbors were drawn to Capitol Hill by the work on the Capitol extension and dome (1851-68) and completion of the Treasury Building (1855-69), two projects where stone cutters and masons provided the central core of expertise. He may well have also worked on the Patent and Post Office extensions also underway at the time.

According to the 1860 Census, Ward 6 had 5,594 inhabitants (of which 113 were listed as “black” and the rest “white”), ranking last in population among Washington’s seven wards. There were 1,027 families and 1,003 houses. The professional profile of the ward was overwhelmingly that of skilled laborers associated with the construction trades -- blacksmiths, tinnerns, copper smiths, bricklayers, carpenters; military/soldiers, associated with the Marine Barracks on Eighth Street, and trades linked to it such as musicians, tailors, shoemakers; skilled laborers associated with the ship building activities at the Navy Yard – tinnerns, boiler makers, machinists, pyrotechnists, gunners, engineers, boatmen, moulders, modelers, and riggers; physicians and medical personnel associated with the Marine Hospital/City Asylum ; and lastly the merchants/retailers (e.g. grocers) and other service personnel (e.g. ministers) to support these key activities/industries. Many, if not most of these were immigrants from the British Isles or Germany.

## **Rothwell: A Prosperous Capitol Hill Family**

Richard Rothwell was a marble cutter/stonemason by profession. He came to America from Manchester, England in early 1850 with his wife and four children, arriving by ship in the port of Baltimore. They settled initially in Baltimore, but Rothwell was unsuccessful. After two years, he moved his family to the smaller and less sophisticated city of Washington, D.C. where stonemasons were in great demand as construction on the new federal capital and major public buildings accelerated. The affairs of Richard Rothwell and his extended family prospered in the capital city.

The 1853 edition of the “Washington and Georgetown Directory” firsts lists Richard Rothwell, and what is most probably a brother Daniel, “stonecutters” both, living respectively at “north side Massachussetts Ave. between New Jersey Ave. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street West” and “west side New Jersey Ave between D and E Streets” (near present- day Union Station).



**Richard Rothwell**



**Emma Rothwell  
(nee Bourne)**

Richard moved subsequently to lots he owned in the northeast corner of Square 1007, just off Maryland Ave. at the intersections of “F ” and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets, N.E. , before moving to Ninth Street, N.E. in September 1858 sometime after his purchase of lots 10 and 11 in Square 919. By 1864 Rothwell had completed one of the few two-story brick residences east of Fourth Street, N.E., rivaling the stately Philadelphia Row townhouses along 11<sup>th</sup> Street ,S.E., which were built at the same time.

The Rothwell family – both men and women --proved very successful in business as stonecutters and stone and brick suppliers (Richard Rothwell operated a stone yard in Square 941 lots 7 and 8 and a brick yard at 12<sup>th</sup> and “C” Streets), plumbers/gas fitters, real estate speculators and builders, pool hall operators, grocers and retailers (Emma Rothwell ran a grocery from 26 Ninth Street in the early 1860’s, and her oldest son William sold plumbing and building supplies such as slate fireplaces from his store on Pennsylvania Avenue), and were active in all aspects of their Capitol Hill community. Richard Rothwell also enlisted in the Union Army, Columbia Regiment, in 1861, qualifying for a Civil War veteran’s pension.

In an undated letter, Sarah Jane Rothwell Richardson wrote about her memories of the Civil War.

My father went to war with the North and my mother kept a little grocery store in the front basement of our home to help keep the children together. I had three brothers and three sisters. My brothers were Richard, William, and Daniel Rothwell. My sisters were Emma Wagner, Anna Peake, and Lillie Rothwell.

We lived at 26 9th St. NE the house faced A St. and my mother had a lovely flower garden in front of the home, and when my father bought the house it was said that the bricks and the tin on the roof were brought from England. There were only two brick houses in the NE, the one I was born in and Isherwoods at 14th and C NE, all the rest of the places were cornfields and flower gardens. East Capitol st. was nothing but a mud hole until they laid the wooden block pavement down ...

The hospitals were north of Lincoln Park, and my mother would pick lovely bunches of flowers and take them over to the sick soldiers. My sister and I would go along and stop and pick daisies and violets on the commons as we went along. The sick soldiers would seem pleased at two little girls bringing them such pretty flowers...

My mother had a cow, geese, ducks, chickens, turkeys and pigs. She kept a big stable yard along the side of the house. We would take the geese out on the lot just opposite the house, and my brother Dan would take the cow out and let her eat some grass. One evening he took her out to the lot and put the plug in the ground to hold her while he ate his supper. After supper he went out for Sukey and she was gone. It was dark and he searched all over but could not find her. The next morning he went over to the hospital and there lay Sukey dead. The guard at the hospital had shot her, thinking she was a spy. It was dark when she wandered over there and no lights, all he could see was the shadow of something and they were supposed to shoot at anything after dark.



Richard Rothwell and his daughters circa 1900  
in front of 28 9th St. NE

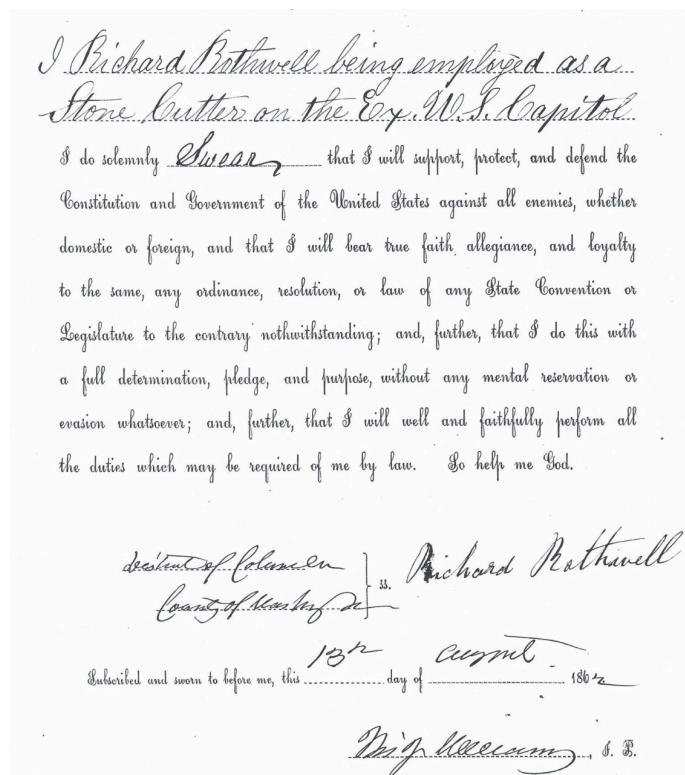


## Rothwell Family Construction Projects

The Rothwell men are documented to have worked on the construction of a number of the more prominent early public buildings in the nation's capital, including the enlargement of the Patent Building (known now as the National Portrait Gallery), the Pension Building (now known as the Building Museum), the Capitol Extension, the Treasury Building west wing, the Washington Monument completion, the Smithsonian's Arts and Sciences Building (known then as the National Museum), barracks and BOQ's at Fort Myers, and various cenotaphs and private memorials at Congressional Cemetery.

### Capitol Extension

By 1850 the Capitol could no longer accommodate the growing numbers of senators and congressmen from newly admitted states, let alone house the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress. On July 4, 1851, President Filmore laid the cornerstone for the northeast corner of the new House wing. The House of Representatives opened in December 1857 and the Senate in January 1859. The old Capitol dome was removed in 1856. Work on the new dome and extension was interrupted in 1861 by the outbreak of the Civil War and resumed the following year with final completion of the extension and dome in 1868. We know from Richard Rothwell's obituary in the National Intelligencer that he worked on the Capitol extension. The Capitol archives managed by the Architect of the Capitol show that Richard Rothwell, "employed as a stone cutter on the Ex. U.S. Capitol" take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and U.S. Government on August 13, 1862.



In a letter written by Sara Jane Richardson in 1942, she wrote, “My father was a stone mason and worked on the capitol building.” After the civil war, he helped finish the Capitol and set the statue on top of the building.

#### Treasury Extension (South, West, and North Wings)

The Treasury was built over the course of four decades, with the east and center wings constructed between 1836 and 1842, and the south, west and north wings, between 1855 and 1869. Richard Rothwell’s obituary mentions that he worked on the south, west and north wings of the Treasury building, although Treasury records, including lists of skilled workmen and specifically stone masons employed on the project, do not mention Richard Rothwell or any of his neighbors.

Unlike the Capitol, work on the Treasury was not officially suspended with the outbreak of the Civil War, although the pace of work slowed markedly with the completion of the South Wing in September 1861. The West Wing was completed in 1865, followed by the North Wing on the site of the old State Department Building, which was torn down in 1867. Throughout, no fewer than one hundred stone cutters and masons comprised the largest work crew at the construction site. Jacobs documents the further evolution in labor practices during this period toward. The stone cutter and bricklayer strikes of 1867 at the Treasury highlighted labor’s growing cohesiveness and assertiveness.

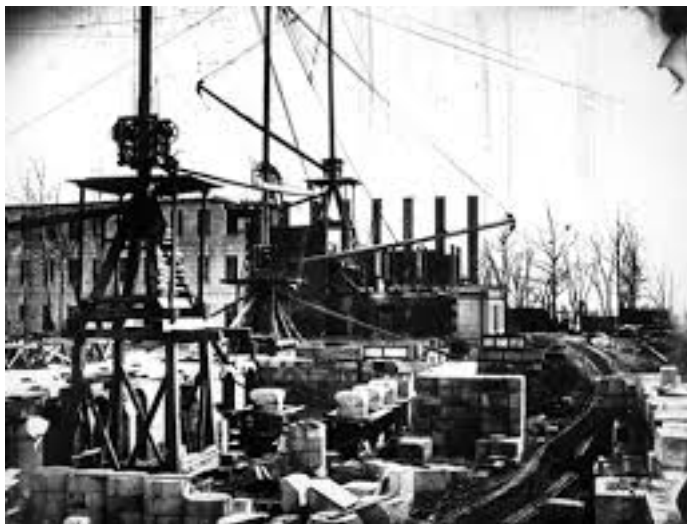


Photo by Louis E Walker

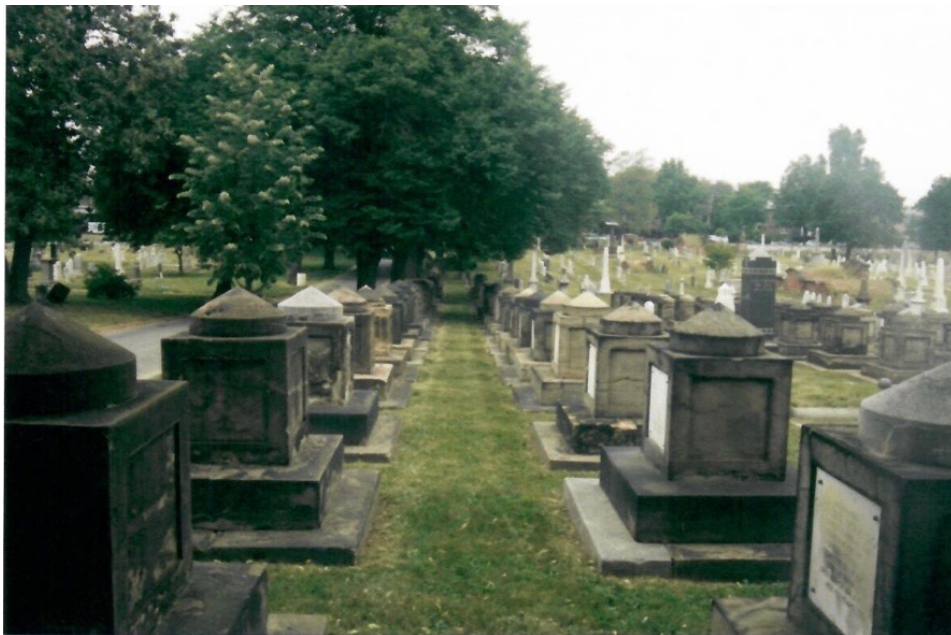
The West Wing of the U.S. Treasury building, the largest single extension to Robert Mill’s original building, began in 1857 in a time of peace and was substantially completed by 1865 after the Civil War’s conclusion.

### Congressional Cemetery Cenotaphs

Many of the first, second, and third generation Rothwells, including infants, are buried at Congressional Cemetery, beginning with an infant who died on July 4, 1858, and ending with Edwin L. Rothwell, son of William, who was interred on May 16, 1970.

Congressional Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in Washington, with the first burials dating from 1807. Though a private cemetery, deeded to Christ Church in 1812, and closely affiliated with that Church under the name of Washington Parish Burial Ground for many years, Congressional Cemetery enjoyed a close association with the Capitol and Congress, both financially through Congressional appropriations, and more importantly from the 80 Congressmen as well as other notables buried there. The first interment on April 11, 1807, was of William Swinton, a stonecutter from Philadelphia, who had been recruited the previous August by Benjamin Latrobe to work on the Capitol Building.

Over time, and with the increased use of the cemetery by the government, it became more commonly known as Congressional Cemetery. Beginning with a Congressional resolution of March 3, 1839, it became the custom to erect cenotaphs for each Congressman or Senator who died during his term of office. The cenotaph was designed by Benjamin Latrobe, Architect of the Capitol. According to House Document No. 7, 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 1871, House Clerk Edward McPherson noted, "Paid to Richard Rothwell for erecting 20 cenotaphs in the Congressional Cemetery under contract with the Clerk of the House, pursuant to proposals (see sec. 4, act of July 15, 1870, making appropriations for sundry civil expenses), \$2, 300." The Congress discontinued the practice of erecting cenotaphs in 1876.



Cenotaphs at Congressional Cemetery

### Smithsonian “National Museum” (Arts and Industries Building)

Smithsonian archives provide a rich record of people involved in building the “National Museum”, later renamed the Arts and Industries Building, from the highest Smithsonian officials down to the common laborers at work on the project from groundbreaking in 1879 to completion in 1881. In 1876, the Smithsonian Board of Regents requested an appropriation from Congress to build a new museum, a necessity because of the incoming collections from the International Exhibition in Philadelphia. Congress complied and made an appropriation in 1879. The Smithsonian instituted a commission headed by William T. Sherman was placed in charge of the construction project. Construction began in April 1879 and was completed in 1881. Richard Rothwell and R.H. Lloyd were the lowest bidders and therefore won the contract to supply the granite, sandstone, and slate and do the cut stone work for the new museum. The amount of the contract for cut stone work was \$7,196 and covered all the work on the four Ohio sandstone entrances, sandstone window sills, granite bases, steps, platforms and cheek blocks for the building, and inscription stones. According to Richard Rothwell’s financial summary, the total amount realized was \$9,401.00, less expenses of \$7,778.19, leaving a profit of \$1,622.91 for the partnership on the contract.



Construction Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building  
Smithsonian Archives



### Former Pension Building, Present Building Museum

Now housing the National Building Museum, the Pension Building was erected to serve the needs of the Union veterans after the Civil War. During and after the Civil War, Congress passed laws expanding the eligibility for pensions of the wounded, maimed, and the widowed and orphaned of the Civil War. Designed by Army Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs in 1881, and constructed between 1882 and 1887, the Pension Building housed the U.S. Pension Bureau, a Federal agency created to award pensions to Union veterans. Richard Rothwell worked on the Pension Building. His name is on a piece of paper that was found in one of the cornerstones in the building.



Building Museum



### St. John's College

Richard Rothwell built St. John's Catholic Institute on Vermont Ave. opposite the Lutheran Church and statue of Martin Luther in 1879. This was perhaps his most ambitious private sector project based on the architectural plan that have survived to this day. Unfortunately, the Institute was torn down in the 1960's to make way for high rise apartments. The total cost of the work was estimated by the D.C. Supreme Court auditors to be \$2,293.23, including a profit of \$203.97. As in the case of the National Museum, Rothwell and Lloyd subcontracted some work to local stone cutters like the Thorpes, but much of the stone work was done by Rothwell family members.

The Rothwell family could well have worked on other public buildings under construction at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century for which documentation cannot be found. More likely, the family's business interests shifted more exclusively to real estate and house contracting with Washington's population boom after the Civil War. The many city improvements initiated by Mayor "Boss" Sheppard in the early 1870's, such as the laying of sewers, paving and lighting of streets, and the beginning of public transportation, led to the residential building boom of the second half of the decade.

### Real Estate and Residential Construction:

Rothwell and his sons were active participants in shaping their immediate neighborhood along 9<sup>th</sup> Street and East Capitol and the greater Capitol Hill landscape. They built No. 22, No. 24 and No. 28 Ninth Street NE and also a small apartment building where No. 26 Ninth Street NE now stands in 1876/7 and No. 800 East Capitol Street, originally a feed store, in 1879.

On the opposite side of Ninth Street NE in Squares 941 and 942, they built Nos. 23 and 25 Ninth Street in 1890 on land they had used for their stonecutting business. In 1892 after moving two frame houses in which Daniel Rothwell and his sister Emma had lived they built Nos. 10 and 11 9th St. SE (No. 10 Ninth Street is the current residence of Eleanore Holmes-Norton). Richard Rothwell built 115, 117 and 119 10th St. NE. The 115 Tenth St. NE house was once on the Capitol Hill Restoration Society.



115, 117, 119 10th St. NE



23 and 25 9th St. NE

Rothwell and his eldest son William owned and built on property throughout the city, some of which has not survived to this day. William was a plumber and gas fitter by profession as well as a builder and lived and operated his plumbing business on Pennsylvania Ave SE in Square 731 where the Library of Congress Jefferson Building now stands, and built a large residence on Independence Avenue SE in Square 732 where the Library of Congress Madison Building now stands.

Richard Rothwell was once paid by Congress for creating 20 cenotaphs that remember late Congressmen and Senators in Congressional Cemetery. He died in Washington in 1906, 20 years after his wife Emma. They are buried beneath a sighing angel in Congressional Cemetery.

William died from bronchial asthma in 1914 and his wife Sarah passed away in 1933. Both died at their home on 24 Ninth Street NE.



By the end of World War I, several of the third generation Rothwells had abandoned their entrepreneurial legacy, shifting to clerical jobs in the private and public sectors. Daniel Rothwell was the last of Richard Rothwell's sons to pass away in 1940 at the age of 89. Most of the first and second generation, and several of the third generation of Rothwells are buried in Congressional Cemetery.

## **HISTORIC HOUSE IN SQUARE 919 - FEDERAL STYLE TOWNHOUSE**

Number 24, Ninth Street, NE is both typical and unique as one of the earlier, pre-Victorian brick residences on Capitol Hill. It was built sometime between 1858, when the land on which the house was eventually built was acquired, and 1864 when the District of Columbia Tax Records first assessed the value of a "double two story" brick residence for \$2000. It is not possible to give a precise date for the construction since no District of Columbia building permit records have survived prior to 1877. That said, it is likely from the tax and assessment records that the house was built in 1862-63, since the first valuation appears in the 1864 D.C. Tax Record.

When the house was built, there was only a scattering of houses nearby, mostly south and west closer to the Capitol and the Navy Yard. The house was in every sense on the fringe of residential development at the time. It remained the only brick structure in Square 919 until the mid-1870's (according to the 1874 Faetz and Pratt plat records and DC Tax Records), when a number of brick townhouses were completed along East Capitol, Eighth Street, Ninth Street and "A" Street.

Several early wood frame houses had also been built by the mid-1870's according to Faetz plat records, which show seven frame buildings and one brick building on Square 919 in 1874. The latter frame houses date from the late 1860's, if not earlier.

## **Distinguishing features of 24 9th St. NE**

The Rothwell house has weathered well the last 160 years and remains essentially intact in its original condition. It has a number of unique features, both inside and out, that corroborate its "old house" status.

Compared to today's row of four ornate townhouses sandwiched along Ninth Street, not to mention the imposing Davmar Apartment Building just to the south, No. 24 Ninth Street NE must have been an imposing residence when it was first built amidst the open pastures occupying virtually all of Capitol Hill west of Fourth Street and north of Pennsylvania Avenue. It is a federal style townhouse with Victorian flourishes that above all reflects Richard Rothwell's profession as a marble cutter, his middle class aspirations and tastes, his English origins and the early Civil War period in which he was building. The Rothwell house resembles more the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19th century federal period townhouses of Alexandria and Georgetown than the largely Victorian housing stock on Capitol Hill. The wide, flat front and graceful curving stoop and cast iron railing contrast sharply with narrower bay front townhouses. The marble over









Green Man

stone foundations and pressed brick façade are equally distinguishing. Nevertheless, the geometrically carved marble framing of the doorway with its carved Green Man which stands for verdancy and new beginnings, the marble lintels over the main floor windows, and the eaves, denticulated cornices and brackets at the roof line are compromises with the later architectural styles (Italian and Gothic) of the Victorian era.

**Front:** The house is unusual for its 22 foot width, since the standard width of most of the later Victorian houses was 18 feet. The decorative stone detailing on the front façade and the curved marble stoop and supporting pillar have already been mentioned. It seems likely that Rothwell used local Maryland marble to build his house, although one old resident of Ninth Street (Margaret Johnson at No. 19 Ninth Street) , who knew Sarah Rothwell before she died in 1933, said that the carved Green Man keystone on the arch of the front door came from England. The marble probably came from the same source as that used for the Capitol Extension – a project on which Rothwell was working while he was building his new house.

The checkerboard marble and red and grey slate pavers and garden edging connecting the sidewalk and the stoop are also original to the house and further testimony to Rothwell's stonecutting profession. The front door frame with panelling is original to the house.



The front door is a Victorian reproduction, while the semicircular arched transom in sunburst style is a reproduction built by the present owner's father using German antique glass.

Finally, one of Capitol Hill's few remaining coal cellars lies under the northern half of the front garden/easement. Coal stoves were the chief source of heating at this time, positioned in front of traditional fireplaces and using the fireplace flues and grates in each room to circulate heat (One such grate in the front , upstairs bedroom was uncovered in 1982 when the room was stripped of old wallpaper for plastering). The coal cellar has a grate at the sidewalk/street end and a doorway opposite facing the house. The separate fence gate was opened, the coal grate lifted, and anthracite coal shoveled into the coal bin for storage. Residents would exit the north door of the English basement to fetch coal supplies. Hot water heating with radiators became the preferred technology starting in the mid-1870's, eventually obviating the need for such underground coal bins.

**Back:** The rear of the house is special for the white granite foundations at the English basement level. According to the 1887 Hopkins City Plats, No. 24 Ninth Street did not have the 10 feet X 9 feet two-story extension off the back of the house; however, the 1892 Hopkins Plats show an extension had been built sometime during the intervening five years, using the same white granite and marble as the original foundation. This addition no doubt reflects the arrival of modern plumbing to include indoor toilet/bathing facilities on the first floor and a more modern kitchen in the English basement.

The kitchen door opened onto a narrow, sunken patio with retaining wall and steps leading up to the rear garden, privy (located where the trellis is now) and rear storage shed and stable (built on the eastern half of lot 10 running behind the house). Once the surrounding townhouses on Ninth Street had been built in the late 1870's, the Rothwells continued to use the adjacent lot 10 for horse and buggy access until No. 815 "A" Street was built in 1914. The need for a stabling area had disappeared by that time and the need for garages and potential parking problems were not yet apparent.



**First Floor:** The entrance hallway is exceptionally wide and long with the staircases to the rear of the house. Double parlors with pocket doors separating them are also well proportioned. The doors off the hallway suggest that the parlors were used at least part of the time as bedrooms.



Richard Rothwell raised seven children in this house, and while we know that the oldest son William had already moved to his Pennsylvania Ave. address (site of present-day Library of Congress Jefferson Building) with his wife Sarah and youngest sister Annie by 1870, and third son Daniel and his oldest sister Emma had moved to Nos. 10 and 12 Ninth Street SE, respectively, by 1874, we also know that Richard's brother James lived with the family. Consequently, this was a crowded house, and there was certainly a need for bedrooms on the main floor. According to neighbor Margaret Johnson, Sarah Rothwell used the rear parlor for her bedroom in her waning years to minimize climbing stairs. Today the parlors have been restored as formal living rooms.

The single pane sashes in the front parlor windows and upstairs front bedroom windows may not be original to the house but are certainly late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sash-operated windows, while the six pane sashes in the rear parlor windows and those in the rear upstairs bedroom are original with the original glass (One pane in the upper sash of the right rear parlor window has the etched initials "W.R." for "William Rothwell", the last Rothwell to live in the house). The window frames in the front of the house are unusual in that they are all angled out to provide maximum light. The floors in the parlors and throughout the first and second floors are original, variegated width, heart-of-pine plank floors.





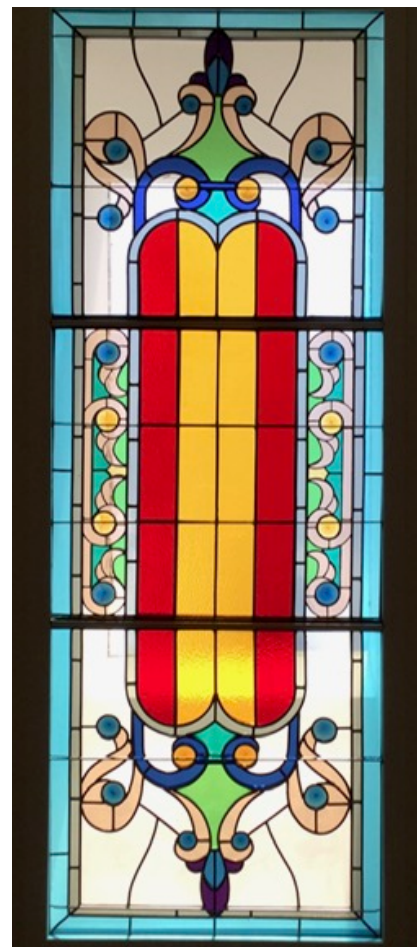
The front parlor marble mantel piece is original to the house and probably imported from England. The ceiling rosettes and moldings were added in 1983. The gaslight chandeliers and sconces in the hallways, stairwells and parlors are period from Boston and true to the house based on the gas pipe mains remaining in the attic and buried in plaster throughout the house. The front parlor chandelier from 1865 contains rare etched glass shades.

The doorway to the rear bathroom was probably a window before the rear section of the house was added in the late 1880's and in fact is the same width as the rear parlor windows. The bathroom contains an 1870 marble top chest, adapted as a vanity, and mirror, plus period wall sconces.

**Second Floor:** The staircase leading to the second floor bedrooms is an interesting configuration that doubles back on itself from a mid point landing. The original house had no plumbing upstairs; a large window similar to the other upstairs rear windows graced the landing where the door to the upstairs bathroom is now located. The upstairs bathroom was added in 1985 and contains another 1870 marble top chest, adapted as a vanity, and mirror flanked by period wall sconces.



The stained glass skylight in the bathroom was designed by the present owner and built by his father. With the addition of the upstairs bathroom and attending loss of a rear window, a skylight was opened over the staircase. The skylight was also designed by the present owner and built by his father using antique German glass.



The age of the house is immediately apparent from the sag in the second story floor and the accompanying droop in the door frame to the small front bedroom. This bedroom was undoubtedly used for infants and very young children since another doorway (also slightly drooping!) connects the room to the main front bedroom. It can be pointed out here that all the bedroom and parlor doors are original four panel doors on old "European" hinges. The door connecting the two front bedrooms contains the original, restored lock hardware.

The main front and rear bedrooms have their original chimney closets, which would have been an extravagance when the house was built since closets were taxed as recent times. separate rooms. All the other closets that exist in the house today have been added in

**English Basement:** The English basement was the main social or family area of the house, since this is where the kitchen and dining area was located. It is also the most extensively altered section of the house. When the present owner purchased the house in 1982, the basement level was divided into a front apartment with bath and fireplace and a rear kitchen and dining area with a furnace positioned where the rear fireplace is now located. A wall and doorway separated the two halves of the basement. In addition, the stairwell was enclosed with heart-of-pine planking and a plank door with latch, thus sealing off the basement area from the rest of the house. The stairwell was original to the house.

In the 1989/90 renovation of the English basement, the present owner preserved the kitchen (while updating the appliances), but essentially gutted the rest of the downstairs. The owner made a conscious choice **not** to move the dining room to the main floor as has been done in most Capitol Hill renovations.

The English basement was the perfect place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for cooking, eating and socializing, since it was cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than the rest of the house. It also provided direct and quick access to the rear privy! The front half of the downstairs was thus turned into a formal **dining room** with additional closet space. The raised pedestal brick fireplace in the dining room was replaced with a late 19<sup>th</sup> century French mantel. The wooden pillars were another addition.

The center window was opened downward to create a floor to ceiling opening to match the flanking all glass doors on either side. In order to do this, the front well leading to the coal bin was expanded slightly on the south side by the stoop. Old French doors were installed between the dining room and the rear kitchen area, and there is also a concealed door to the basement bathroom.

A rear fireplace was reopened in the **kitchen area** and an 1880's walnut mantel installed. The furnace was updated and moved to the side with the hot water heater and washer/dryer, forming a small utility and tool area adjacent to a new bathroom. The rear window frames were opened downward an additional 12 inches to increase light and new double-pane Pella windows installed. The refrigerator was moved under the



stairwell and surrounded by new kitchen cabinets. When removing the stairwell planking, the owner discovered nothing but packed dirt under the staircase, suggesting that the basement may well have originally been nothing more than packed earth or paving stones similar to those covering the coal cellar floor. The owner also found some old chicken bones and a whiskey flask. New hardwood plank flooring and ceramic tile were installed over the concrete floor. All electrical wiring and lighting was updated and additional electric and hot water heating units installed.

**Rear Garden:** The rear garden has been renovated to create a two-tiered patio with an upper garden. The original layout, however, contained a much smaller well area about 6 feet X 10 feet outside the kitchen door with stone stairs immediately to the left of the door leading up to the main garden level. The well area was expanded in 1985 and further in 1999 with the construction of new retaining walls and shift in the stair location to a more central position in the garden. All the original capstone and stone steps were reutilized. During this renovation, several interesting artifacts came to light, including an 1865 Indian head penny and numerous pieces of anthracite coal. In digging post holes for the trellis, the owner uncovered pieces of white stoneware which archeologists at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria date to the Civil War period and said belied an old privy.

The only original plantings from the 1982 purchase include the large American holly tree in the rear garden and the wisteria bush on the trellis. Other plantings include azaleas, rhododendron, crape myrtle, dogwood, various evergreen shrubs, boxwood, and roses.

**Roof:** A new tin roof was installed in 1983. A two zone (Spacepak) air conditioning system was installed in 1996 and replaced in 2018.

**Ownership:** 24 Ninth Street remained in the hands of the Rothwell family from 1862/63 until the estate of Sarah Rothwell, wife of William Rothwell was settled in 1938. None of Richard Rothwell's immediate family members can be documented living in 24 Ninth Street between 1877 and 1894. It is likely the house was rented along with the next door house 22 Ninth Street and the three flats in the Avia Apartment Building at 26 Ninth Street which they built. The latter was sold in 1903 to E.G. Egloff and torn down to make way for a larger apartment building constructed in 1906, while No. 22 Ninth Street was sold in 1910.

Richard Rothwell moved into No. 28 Ninth Street following its completion in 1877. The new house was grander, occupying the northeast corner lot in Square 919 with two bays, was larger by one story, and had modern amenities like indoor plumbing which No. 24 did not. Richard lived at this address until he died in 1906. His daughter Lillie lived with him and continued to live in the house after his death until 1920. His youngest son Daniel then lived there until 1927. The house finally passed from the Rothwell heirs in 1938.



28 9th St. NE

During that 75 year period, the following family members occupied 24 9th St. NE:

- Richard and Emma Rothwell and family: 1862/63 to 1876\*
- Various renters: 1877 to 1893\*
- Richard Rothwell Jr. and Hannah Rothwell: 1894 to 1896 (Richard Jr. died in 1896.)
- William and Sarah Rothwell and family: 1896 to 1914 (William died in 1914.)
- George J. Rothwell, William's oldest son, and Bessie Rothwell (together with Sarah Rothwell): 1914 to 1933 (Sarah Rothwell died in 1933.)

In March 1938 ownership passed from the heirs of Sarah Rothwell to Laura and Lydia Bowman. In November 1956 Laura Bowman sold the house to Adeline Gier Smith. In November 1982 Smith sold the house to Timothy P. Hauser, the present owner.