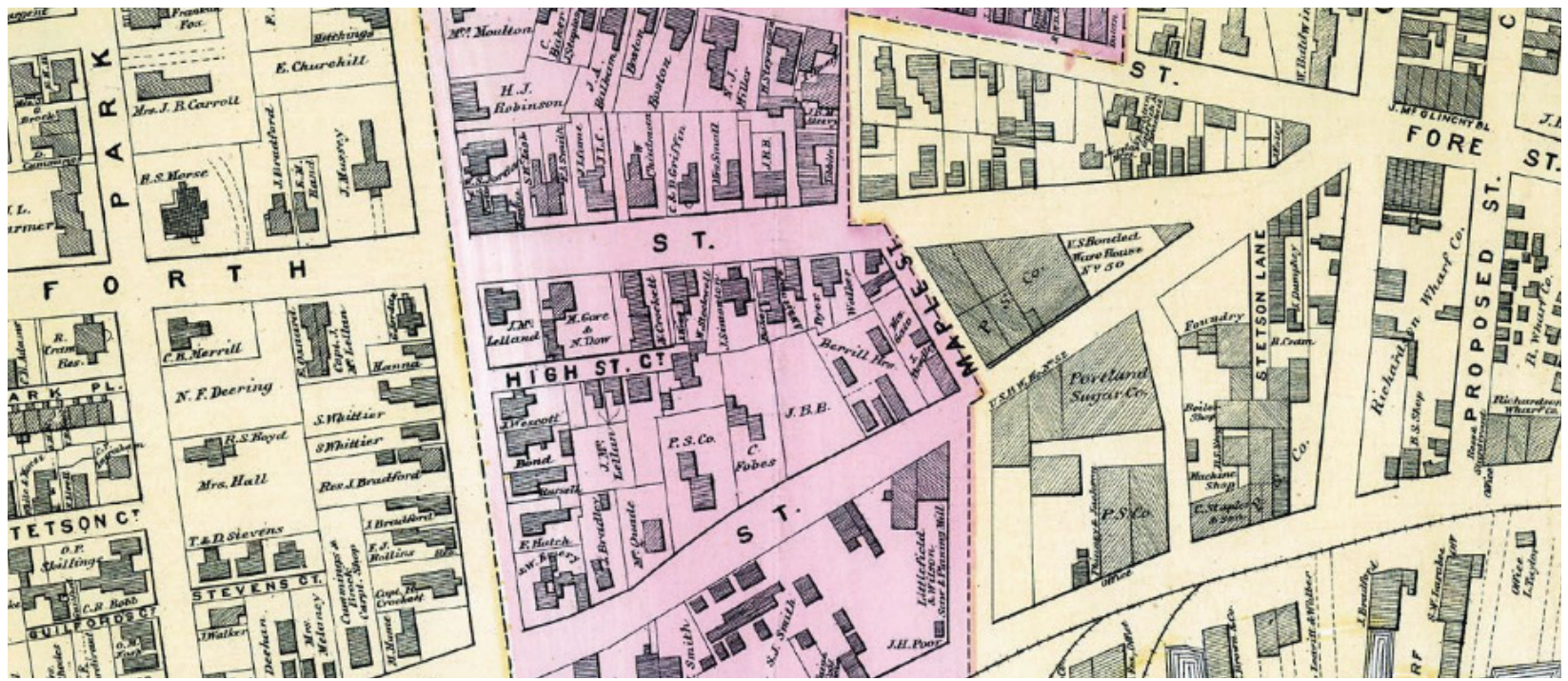




10 Danforth Street
Sullivan-Seigal Block
circa 1871

WR
Wright-Ryan



Cumberland County 1871, F.W. Beers & Co.

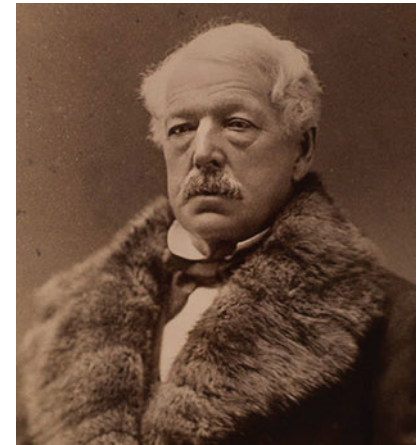
A small two-story triangular brick building at the intersection of York and Danforth streets first appears on a map of Portland in 1871. The building was part of John Bundy (J.B.) Brown's rebuilding around the site of his Portland Sugar Company factory, which was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1866. The large brick structure on the Maple Street end of the block was also a post-fire construction by J.B. Brown.

In 1873, Brown ceased sugar production. He maintained ownership of the Maple Street facility as storage space, but sold the small triangular parcel to Portland landlord John C. Costello. Irish immigrants John Sullivan and his son John William rented Costello's building and operated a small grocery store out of the street floor.

Born in Ross Parish, county Galway in 1823, John Sullivan and his wife Mary Thornton survived the Great Famine in one of the worst hit areas of Ireland. The couple had two sons before emigrating to New Brunswick in the 1850s, then to Portland in 1862. They had five more children after leaving Ireland.



John Sullivan (Photo: *The Irish of Portland, Maine*)



J.B. Brown (1804–1881) was involved in much of Portland's development in the 19th century. One of Portland's wealthiest businessmen, he operated a real estate business, hotels, and a sugar refinery.

In 1873, the Sullivans bought the empty lot behind the triangle with fronting on 29 York Street, where the two-story part of 10 Danforth now stands. The Sullivans built a large wood frame building on the lot at 29 York, and continued to rent the brick building that contained the grocery store.

Two years after John's death in 1881, his children were able to buy the triangular building when Brown and Sons foreclosed on the Costello heirs because of mortgage default.

The Sullivan offspring owned the entire area of 10 Danforth for thirty years, passing title among themselves through sale or inheritance, with the property ending up in the hands of John Sullivan's only daughter Sabrina Cady.

Until 1893, Sullivan brothers John William, Peter, and Mark, and brother-in-law James Cady lived in the buildings and ran a 'saloon' in 29 York. The enterprising John William - in the early 1880s a city councilman for the Gorham's Corner ward - was running his own men's hotel, saloon, and oyster bar eatery around the corner at 115 Center Street.

The York/Danforth compound became rental property, with the shop portion (21 York) nearly always described as vacant in Portland city directories. The brick apartment above (23 York) housed single transient workmen, while 29 York enjoyed the occupancy of Irish immigrant and railroad employee Thomas Joyce and his family for over twenty years. The Sullivans' association with hard drink and all sorts of Irish public conviviality forms part of the lore of 19th century Gorham's Corner, but the family moved out of this site by 1893, and had even severed connections with the 115 Center Street hotel and eatery by 1903. By the turn of the century, Peter, Mark, and James had died, and Sabina had moved to a house she bought from banker Cullen Chapman at 9 Oak Street.

In the 1910 census, the brick structure still contained the vacant shop and a family of three above, while 29 York housed seven adults and eight children in the former saloon.

In 1914, Sabrina Sullivan Cady sold the York-Danforth lots to Sarah Seigal, sister of recent Russian immigrant Abraham Seigal. Abraham ran a 'junk shop' from the brick building, while allowing the Joyce family to remain in the wooden house behind. In 1921/22, Seigal demolished the wooden building at 29 York, and improved the whole location by expanding the brick triangle to the back, adding its third floor, and filling in the space where the saloon had stood with the two-story brick structure still in evidence.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1886

Gorham's Corner, where Danforth, York, Pleasant, Union, and Fore Streets meet, was known as an Irish neighborhood from the 1820s. Named for early resident William Gorham, a grocer, it was a poor, working-class neighborhood with a reputation as an unsavory part of town, known for its Irish saloons and tenements.



10 Danforth, Portland Tax Records 1924 via Maine Memory Network (MNN87299)

Shortly after finishing the renovations at 10 Danforth, Seigal sold the properties to Fannie Oretsky who ran a grocery with her husband David. Oretsky rented the garage portion to the Sills Chevrolet business and then to Brockway Motors trucking concern. The 1924 Portland tax photo shows the brief tenure of Sills Chevrolet Service Center.



In 1928, the Oretskys sold the lots and buildings to the Old Tavern Farm dairy of Yarmouth, who wanted a space in Portland for bottling their milk and cream. Old Farm Dairy converted the building and the address numbers (which had always been on the York Street side) disappeared, turning the building's orientation toward Danforth Street. Old Farm Dairy operated from this location for over forty years.

In 1972, the site was bought by Russian-born cousins Harry Matluck and John Vinick for their Mavin Company furniture business, then two years later by the Pine Tree Paper Company. One of these commercial owners must have truncated the building and placed the clock on the face before Wright-Ryan bought the building in 1986.



10 Danforth circa 1980s



Wright-Ryan has been responsible for many of the improvements in Gorham's Corner in recent decades, including restoration of the old Portland Packing Company buildings and creation of the small park in memory of people like Sullivans and Seigals who lived and worked in buildings like 10 Danforth Street.