

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 60

ITEM NUMBER 7

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1. Name: Jones Warehouses 80000099
2. Location: 49-63 Central Street, Providence, R.I.
3. Owner: Orrin E. Jones Trust, 59 Central Street, Providence, R.I. 02907
4. Description: The Jones Warehouses complex consists of five structures of which only four are herein nominated (see site plan). The warehouses are presently used for the storage of household goods and are located in the West End. The oldest is Building A at 63 Central Street, a 3½-story, end-gable, clapboarded structure, with a clerestory roof. It was erected 1861-65 by Winsor and Brown and was shown in the 1875 city atlas as a "gun manufactory." It was purchased by Orrin E. Jones in 1893 and converted for storage use. Although vaults have been installed, the original interior construction remains everywhere visible: all the floors are supported on wooden posts except the top or clerestory, which is suspended from the roof on iron rods. Behind Building A is Building B, a 2-story, flat-roofed, utilitarian, brick structure. It probably dates from the 1890s. In 1895-96 Building C, a flat-roofed, 5-story, 60-x100-foot brick structure, designed by the Providence architectural firm of Gould, Angell and Swift, was built beside Building A. By 1900 a 7-story, 40 x 100-foot addition, known as Building D, was made to the 1895-95 section. These two, side-by-side, brick structures, now forming a single block, present a glazed terra cotta brick facade, with brownstone-trimmed, round-headed, top-story windows, the legacy of the slowly dying Richardsonian Romanesque. Building E, a five-story, reinforced concrete structure located on A Street behind Building A, was erected c. 1927, and is not included in this nomination.

The nominated structures have been very little altered over the years. Each contains tiers of wooden vaults separated by long corridors.

Photograph: 33

5. Significance: The Jones Warehouses are of local and statewide architectural importance. The plain-trimmed c. 1861-65 factory building with its clerestory roof is one of the oldest and least altered industrial structures in Providence and a very late example of a mill type which was popular in Rhode Island in the first half of the nineteenth century. Buildings C and D, in addition to the considerable architectural merit of their unified exterior, possess great significance in being among the earliest buildings erected specifically for the storage of household goods in Providence

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or, so a contemporary account claimed, anywhere. The structures were equipped with such innovations as a (very large) electric elevator and fire doors which closed automatically.

The Jones Warehouses firm was established about 1889 by Orrin E. Jones, a blacksmith. Jones first housed his household-goods storage business in the Lester Hall block nearby on Cranston Street. In 1893, however, he purchased the former gun factory, and in the next few years consolidated the business there and in his other buildings on Central Street. Orrin E. Jones died in 1923. His son, George W. Jones, who had started work with the company in 1907, then took charge and continued to run the business until his death early in 1974.

6. Acreage: About 1 acre.

7. Plat 30, lot 89.

8. UTM reference:

19 298670 4631700

9.

Level of significance: state

