

## Today in Columbus History:

On September 9, 1876, an article appeared in the Columbus Enquirer-Sun under the title "Thursday Night's Fire" about a fire on the fourth floor of the Sammis & Rooney furniture store on Broad. The rest of the article dealt with the various insurance coverage on the building and contents.

Sammis and Rooney refers to Richard H. Sammis and Lawrence Rooney, partners in the furniture business that started in Columbus in 1837. Richard and Mary Ann (Byrne) Sammis were from New York City. They were married there in 1830 and had one daughter, Phoebe born there in 1831. Lawrence Rooney was born in either Pennsylvania or New York, depending on the source and married Georgia Ann Brown in 1842 in Russell County, Alabama. They had five daughters Clara, Catherine, Evelyn Augusta and Ann in Columbus.

This was not the partners' first experience with fire. Their business burned in March 1847, along with several others on Broad including Tarbox's bookstore, Wade and Middlebrook's saddlery warehouse, Hall and & Moses hardware, McNeil's shoe store, the clothing and millinery store of Mr. and Mrs. Dessau, Fogle and Cushman's dentist rooms and Holden's oyster House and confectionary, among others.

Sammis and Rooney built a four-story brick building with an iron front in 1855 and moved their business there in the latter part of the year. This was shortly before the construction of the Bank of Columbus (the Iron Bank), just down the street. Ads with a drawing of the new Sammis and Rooney building started appearing in 1856. Richard H. Sammis died in 1866 after which, his wife continued to own a portion of the building.

The structure appears to be the only four-story building on the Broad in the 1885 Sanborn maps. The customers did not have to worry about making the trek all the way up to the top, though. In 1879, Lawrence Rooney installed an elevator to allow them to be whisked up to the fourth floor to examine his fine selection of carpets and rugs.

After 50 years in the business, Rooney sold out in early 1887 to Charles A. Klink. Along with the stock and goodwill, long-time clerk, James A. Calhoun went along with the new owner. Calhoun was the brother of Alpha T. Calhoun the subject of the last week's Wednesday "Today in Columbus History." He shows up in the 1873-74 and 1884 city directories as a clerk for Rooney and in the 1888 directory as working for Klink.

Georgia Ann Rooney died in 1884 followed by Mary Sammis in 1895 and Lawrence Rooney in 1896. All are buried in Linwood Cemetery along with Richard Sammis.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

*Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.*

**THURSDAY NIGHT'S FIRE.**

The fire which occurred "in the fourth story of Sammis & Roeney's furniture store and occupied by the latter of these as a furniture store, was completely extinguished about 4 o'clock yesterday morning. The flames caught in the back portion of the fourth story and did not reach any of the lower ones. Everything in that part of the building which caught was burned and all below was damaged by water and the removal from the house, save in the cellar where nothing was moved or damaged. The plastering from top to bottom is completely saturated with water. It even leaked into the drug store of Dr. Robert Carter and damaged him perhaps \$50. Some of the fixtures on the top of his store are partially torn up but the loss is a trifle.

From the Columbus Enquirer-Sun, September 9, 1876. Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO)

**New Elevator.**

Mr L Rooney, the well-known furniture dealer, has had a handsome elevator placed in his establishment, so that parties can take a ride and on arriving in an upper story see his fine line of carpets.

From the Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun September 28, 1879. Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO)

**FURNITURE EMPORIUM!**

**SAMMIS & ROONEY,**  
BROAD STREET, COLUMBUS, GA.

HAVE removed their extensive stock of FURNITURE to their

**New Four-Story BRICK BUILDING (IRON FRONT.)**

NEARLY OPPOSITE Their Old Stand.

Where they will be happy to see their old friends and customers, and show them something Brilliant and Inviting in the way of

**FURNITURE**

Our Ware-rooms are unequalled in BEAUTY, and our FURNITURE recherche. We offer rare advantages to purchasers, furnishing their Houses, throughout, in tasteful and uniform Style.

by having a branch of our business in New York City, where the senior partner MANUFACTURES, under his own inspection articles to suit the most fastidious. We have on hand

Rosewood, Walnut and Mahogany

**BEDROOM SUITS,**

an extensive assortment of all kinds of

**CHAIRS!**

Large Gilt-frame MIRRORS, Oval and Square.

A general assortment of

**LOOKING GLASSES IN FRAMES.**

LOOKING GLASS PLATES by the bo  
gle plate; French Plate Glass, do., do.

Columbus, Ga., Aug. 20, 1856



**SAMMIS & ROONEY'S**  
**FURNITURE WARE ROOMS**

**SAMMIS & ROONEY**

**FURNITURE**

suitable for Parlor, Bed, Sitting, Dining Room, and Kitchen,

CONSISTING IN PART OF Rosewood, Walnut, and Mahogany

**PARLOR FURNITURE,** en suite, covered in Brocatelle, Rops, Lasting, Plush, Hair Cloth, fig'd and plain; Mahogany, Rosewood and Blk Walnut WHAT NOTS; Sideboards, Marble and Mahogany Tops;

**SECRETARIES**—Mahogany & Marble Tops, Book Cases attached.

**French Secretaries** AND **LIBRARIES.**

**WARDROBES,** Rosewood, Walnut, Mahogany and Poplar.

**TABLES**—Oval and Square, Centre, Marble Top, Card, Work, Fancy, and Extension.

**BEDSTEADS,** (high and low post) French, Italian & Cottage do. of Rosewood, Walnut and Mahog'y

Enameled Suits of **Bed-Room Furniture,** all colors, Marble and Wood Tops.

**CARPETS**

Tapestry Velvet, Tapestry Brussels, Brussels, Ingrain—Fine and Superfine, Three-Ply Venetian, Hemp, Cocoa Matting, &c.

[Axminster, Chenille, Patent Velvets, RUGS.

**CURTAINS**

of Brocatelle and Damask—all colors.

**SHADES, GILT CORNICES and CURTAIN HOLDERS.**

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From the Columbus Enquirer, September 2, 1856. Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO)

***A Free Ride.***

Along with those Carpets will come a fine Passenger Elevator, which will enable my customers, and especially the ladies, to inspect my stock without any trouble.

sep2, tf

**L. ROONEY,  
83 & 85 Up-stairs.**

From the Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun September 28, 1879. Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO)