

OLD CORNER BOOKSTORE

1-11 SCHOOL STREET /
281-83 WASHINGTON STREET

EST. 1718

ARCHITECT UNKNOWN

THEN



Courtesy of the Bostonian Society

NOW



HISTORY

The Old Corner Bookstore at the corner of School and Washington Streets, at almost 300 years old, is one of only three remaining 18th century houses in Downtown Boston. Originally built for Thomas Crease, who lived upstairs and managed a ground floor apothecary, the building is best known as the 19th century headquarters of American publisher and bookseller, Ticknor and Fields. Ticknor and Fields quickly made a name for itself as the distributor of famed English authors such as Tennyson and Dickens, but its most important contribution was as first publisher of the great authors of the mid-19th century American Renaissance including Thoreau, Emerson, the Alcotts, Hawthorne, Stowe, Longfellow, and Mark Twain. Thoreau's *Walden* and Hawthorne's *Scarlett Letter* were first published here, and the earliest editions of the *Atlantic Monthly* were prepared here. After Ticknor and Fields outgrew the location in 1864, booksellers and publishers continued to occupy the building until 1903.

During the early and mid twentieth century, a range of businesses, including a pizza shop, occupied the space as the building deteriorated. By 1960, the building was slated to be torn down in order to create a parking garage using federal urban renewal funding. Outraged by the proposed demolition, a group of Bostonians (who would eventually form the preservation organization Historic Boston Inc. (www.historicboston.org)) raised \$100,000 to purchase the building, renovate the building's façade, restoring it to its 1828 appearance, and to modernize the interior in order to accommodate new businesses. The Old Corner Bookstore was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. It is an official site on Boston's Freedom Trail.