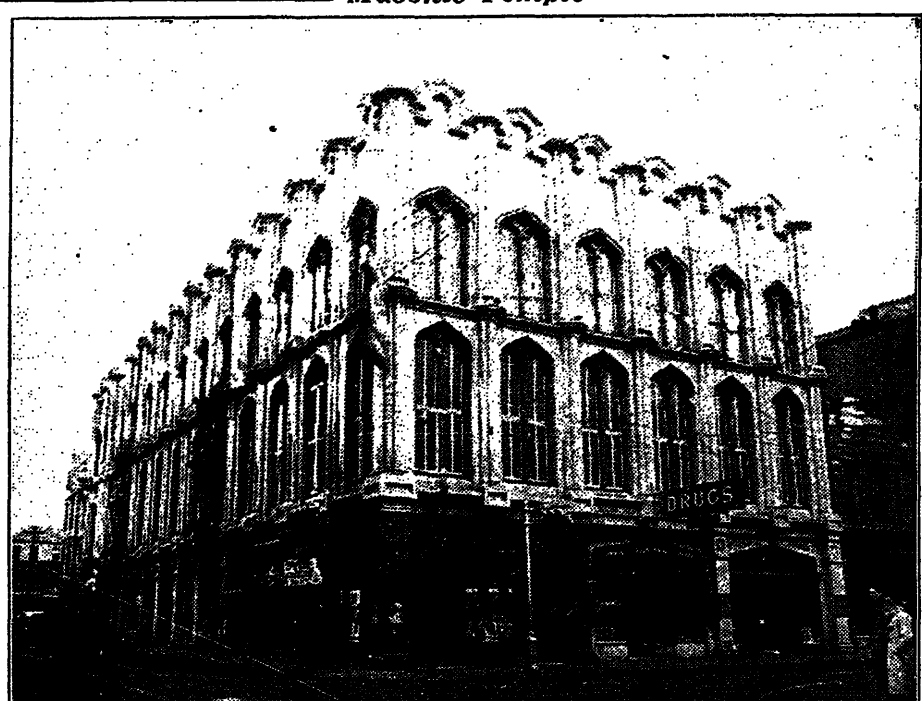


Do You Know Your Charleston?

News & Courier, March 18, 1935

Masonic Temple



—Photo by Schwartz

Building at King and Wentworth Once was Held to Be Place for Devil Worship. Cost \$35,000 to Build in 1872

hand to witness the loss in industries that this state has suffered from the lack of a fair and equitable workmen's compensation act, can appreciate that if we are to progress and develop industrially something has to be done with this question.

JOHN S. CATOR, of the Fort Sumter hotel: I heartily approve of a just workmen's compensation law being passed for the state of South Carolina, and sincerely hope that you will bring every influence to bear to obtain the passage of the bill.

ERNEST L. VISANSKA, attorney: I shall be very glad to devote as much time as may be necessary and my best efforts in endeavoring to have a satisfactory workmen's compensation law enacted.

CHARLES V. BOYKIN, of the Charleston Dry Dock company: This company is entirely in sympathy with this law and we will do all we can to assist you in carrying it through.

ROBERT H. EVANS, of the Building Congress of Charleston county: It is evident that our state must have a law of this nature before our citizens will be enabled to enjoy the results of a prosperous era of industrial activity within its boundaries.

ERNEST H. JEFFORDS, of the Raytheon-Manhattan Incorporated: I feel it is very necessary that the state of South Carolina have a just and fair workmen's compensation act.

JULIAN MITCHELL, of the South Carolina National bank: Although there are a great many small industries that appear to be opposed to such a law being enacted, I have no doubt in my own mind of the benefit which would follow from a proper law being put on the statute books.

GENERAL CHARLES P. SUMMERALL, of the Citadel: I am heartily in favor of such legislation.

EDWARD H. McIVER, of Leland Moore Paint and Oil company: There is no one thing which, to my mind, compares in importance to South Carolina having a proper workmen's compensation law at the earliest possible time.

J. HUGH DAVIS, of the Bull Steamship line: We would like to go on record as being highly in favor of the workmen's compensation law which is proposed for this state.

SIDNEY C. SNEELGROVE, of Snelgrove's French Hat shop: We strongly approve and urge the passage of a fair, just and equitable compensation law in the belief that it will be a powerful incentive toward bringing new industry to the state.

WILLIAM A. O'BRIEN, of the Clyde-Mallory lines: I feel that a fair, just, equitable workmen's compensation law is badly needed in South Carolina and will attract new industries to this state.

ALBERT SOTTILE, of the Pastime Amusement company: It is our hope that the legislature will enact into law a workmen's compensation measure.

E. H. FOULNOT, of Kerrison's: We heartily endorse a workmen's compensation law and we are of the opinion that such a law would be of incalculable value to our state.

T. WILBUR THORNHILL, of the Charleston Oil company: We have never had an employee's suit, yet we do believe that it is necessary for the industrial development of our state to have a just, fair and equitable workmen's compensation act passed.

Plan "Wonderland Road"

Salt Lake City—(AP) Utah plans a "Wonderland Road" linking all the scenic spots by one continuous highway. This, they hope, will be a decided advantage to tourists visiting Utah.

Grown gray in the mystic service of Masonry, Past Grand Masters A. E. Miller and Charles M. Furman sat erect in the back seat of an open carriage on the morning of January 20, 1872. Facing them was aged Ebenezer Thayer, veteran of the grand masters, infirm and ailing. On his knees was an open Bible on which the square and compass rested.

It was a historic day for Charleston Masons. Muller's Brass Band, with instruments polished and shining, strutted at the head of a long parade, of which the carriage was a part. Fifteen local lodges and chapters of the Ancient Free Masons, which had convened at Holmes's Lyceum, were in the procession. Horses pranced and policemen shouted.

The occasion was the laying of the cornerstone for the Masonic Temple, at King and Wentworth streets, shown above. Late Gothic in style, the building is the see of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina.

Five thousand persons looked on as the marble slab, which had served as the cornerstone in the temple built on the same site in 1840, was fixed in its place.

Stone From Jerusalem
In a cavity was placed a sealed jar, containing old coins, papers and a piece of stone, brought from the ruins of the Temple of Jerusalem by Past Grand Master Robert Morris, of Kentucky. The trowel used to spread the mortar was the same one used by the Marquis de Lafayette in laying the cornerstone of the De Kalb monument at Camden, in 1825, now owned by Friendship Lodge No. 9, of Charleston.

Overseers for the occasion were P. K. Coburn, R. C. Baskley, J. C. Lacombe and G. H. Lindsay. Members of the building committee were F. A. Connor, R. S. Burns, W. G. DeSaussure, N. Levin, W. K. Blake, H. W. Schroder, B. R. Campbell and James Conner.

So began the \$35,000 structure, which was to figure prominently in international news about twenty-five years later. Few are the post Confederate war buildings in Charleston that can boast the history of the Masonic Temple.

When Grand Master W. K. Blake, at the conclusion of the ceremonies, struck the stone three times with his hiram and the brethren gave the public grand honors of Masonry by three times three, the responsibility for completing the building was placed in the hands of the architect, J. H. Devereux.

Architect Joins Masons
By December 10, 1872, the temple was finished and was dedicated at a ceremony similar to that of the cornerstone laying. In the meantime, Mr. Devereux, a Roman Catholic, had taken the Entered Apprentice degree to curb criticism which arose when the contract for the structure was awarded to a man who was not a member of the brotherhood.

Somewhat in debt, Charleston Masons prepared to settle down in their new headquarters, liquidate gradually the building debt and roll up a surplus of funds from the stores rented out in the bottom floor of the structure.

But it was not to be. It soon became apparent that something was radically wrong with the new temple. Experts were called in. To keep the building from collapsing, a wall would have to be

erected through the middle of the structure, it was decided.

How much would it cost? The experts shook their heads. Close to \$30,000.

Charleston Masons were called together. It was found impossible for the brotherhood to raise such a sum, since the treasuries of the various chapters and orders had been drained to pay for the original building.

W. L. I. Pays 3 Peppercorns
At last a solution was discovered. The Washington Light Infantry, at the time, was looking for a suitable hall in which to meet. An agreement was reached whereby members of the infantry would erect the wall and receive thirty years rent free of charge. To make the contract legal, officers of the infantry were to pay to the Masons three peppercorns a year.

Friends of the late Past Grand Master Walter M. Whitehead remember his frequently telling about receiving his three peppercorns and writing out a receipt. The ceremony involved must have been not entirely lacking in humor.

After the completion of the wall, for about twenty years it was clear sailing for Charleston Masons. Then arose an issue which made the Charleston Masonic Temple front page news in many papers.

This is the story:
Leo Taxil was a Frenchman with a rather perverted sense of humor. About forty years ago, he came out with the charge that Masons were Luciferians—they worshipped the devil.

In the temple at Charleston, he said, was a special room in which the devil manifested himself. It was here, he said, that neophytes took solemn oaths and pledged their loyalty to Satan.

The charge came at a time when the Roman Catholics and the Masons were not on the best of terms. Pope Leo XIII. heard the Frenchman's story and sent word to Bishop Northrop, of the Charleston diocese of the church.

Asked Bishop to Investigate
"What was this he had heard about the Charleston Masonic Temple?" the pope wanted to know. "Would the bishop please investigate?"

The bishop did. Architect Devereux was summoned and questioned. The charges were ridiculous, he said. There was no such room in the temple. It is not known whether the stone from the Temple of Jerusalem, replying in the cornerstone crypt, stood the Charleston Masons in good stead.

In 1920 it was decided that the lodge rooms were not sufficiently large to accommodate the ever increasing membership of the brotherhood. Consequently, a committee was appointed to investigate and report on some plan to enlarge the temple.

The following year, the temple committee, composed of William W. Wannamaker, Kenneth Baker, J. Campbell Bissell and Thomas R. Waring recommended that \$70,000 be appropriated to extend the building back toward Wentworth street. The report was referred to the finance committee.

Finished in 1923
The building was remodeled and the addition made in 1922. In March of 1923, Most Worshipful Grand Master J. C. Bissell, of Charleston, in his annual address, said:

"After an absence from the temple of more than twelve months we have again assembled within the walls of our building, which has been thoroughly remodeled and equipped in every way possible, with all modern facilities for our convenience."

A report at that time, submitted by the special building committee, revealed that receipts for the building had totaled \$89,460.35, and that the committee was able to return \$2,694.08 of this sum to the grand lodge.

On the committee were Messrs. Wannamaker, Waring and Baker and Jesse Sharp, O. Frank Hart and G. J. Knobloch.

The venerable barber shop of R. E. Felder, which had stood in the rear of the temple, was established on the ground floor of the addition. Once again there was clear sailing for Charleston Masons and for the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons in South Carolina.

At the present time, more than 2,000 Charlestonians can claim membership in the brotherhood. In the cornerstone of the structure, still repose the coins, the papers and the piece of Holy Stone.

F. B. G.

Absent from City 35 Years, He Still Remembers Brogue

John P. Connolly, sales manager for the South Carolina Power company, was in New York last week. With a friend he went to Jack Dempsey's new restaurant across the street from Madison Square Garden.

Mr. Connolly's friend knew Dempsey and introduced Mr. Connolly to him. They stood talking for a few minutes. Then Mr. Connolly noticed that the doorman, a big-haired negro, was observing him closely.

"I wasn't exactly alarmed because I knew that if anybody was going to throw me out of the place, Dempsey probably could do it by himself," Mr. Connolly says.

"After a moment this negro walked over to us. 'Pardon me, sir, he said to me, 'but ain't you from Charleston?' I told him I was. Then he said, 'I shore is good to see somebody from home.'"

The negro, it developed, had been in New York for thirty-five years. "How did you know I was from Charleston?" Mr. Connolly asked him.

"Cap'n," he replied, "nobody ever forgets the way Charleston people talks."

Mr. Connolly said Dempsey recalled his visit here several years ago and asked about William D. Livingston, with whom he was photographed in King street.