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MASONIC TEMPLE USES MOTIFS OF GOTHIC REVIVAL

Nineteenth century photograph shows building before alterations.

Some Gothic Structures Still Survive In Charleston

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The eclecticism to be found in so much Charleston architecture is perhaps one of the most engaging aspects of the city buildings.

One does not travel far down any well-preserved street here and not pass examples of several styles and periods. Most of Charleston's handsome peculiarities were built during the nineteenth century, that time of historicism and imitation.

One variety of this eclecticism which flourished in Charleston was the Gothic Revival. A fair number of structures still exist here in this style and in related styles such as the Moorish.

Little fragments of this style may be seen all over the city. Several structures are more fully designed with complete Gothic facades.

The pointed arch was a neat little nineteenth century device which is in frequent evidence. The windows of the

secondary buildings behind the Izard house at 119 Broad St. show nice examples of the arch, as do the openings of the out buildings and cow shed in the rear yard of the Aiken-Rhett mansion up on Elizabeth Street.

Several churches such as the Fourth Baptist Church at 22

Do You Know Your Charleston?

Elizabeth St. (formerly St. Luke's Episcopal Church) and the interior of the Unitarian Church on Archdale Street offer nineteenth century Gothic.

Gothic Revival design was found to be useful in fraternal buildings and in institutional structures. A fairly massive building could be constructed and the Gothic line patterns would still hold it in good proportions.

The masonic buildings at 270 King St. and 289 Meeting St. demonstrate the success of such design.

Charleston missed out on two Gothic buildings which might still be in use today if the plans had been accepted. The Custom House at East Bay and Market was originally designed as a very large feudal castle with towers and turrets, and St. Philip's Episcopal Church was to be a Gothic cathedral before plans for the present structures were decided upon.

In writing of the Gothic rejection of earlier styles, John Harvey, architectural historian and author of "The Gothic World 1100-1600", states that among fundamental forms the Gothic "accepted the rectangular, rejected the central plan; accepted the arch, and as far as might be, rejected the lintel; accepted the vault, rejected the dome."

The masonic building, now quite altered with its windows filled in, was designed by Charleston architect John Henry Devereaux (1840-1920), who is also responsible for St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, the old post office building, and the now demolished Academy of Music.

The hall was begun in 1871. See GOTHIC, Page 7-B

... Gothic

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and demonstrates the adaptability for commercial and institutional use that the flexible Gothic could offer.

Many a modern critic might argue against such an "artificial" style, stating that Gothic Revival, unlike the initial Gothic, was not an integral part of the structure and was therefore decadent. It remains, however, as a part of Charleston's wonderful maze of architectural delights.
