

From manuscript: "A Brief History of
U.S. District Courthouses in South Carolina"
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McLeod, Editor (1st ed., 2003)

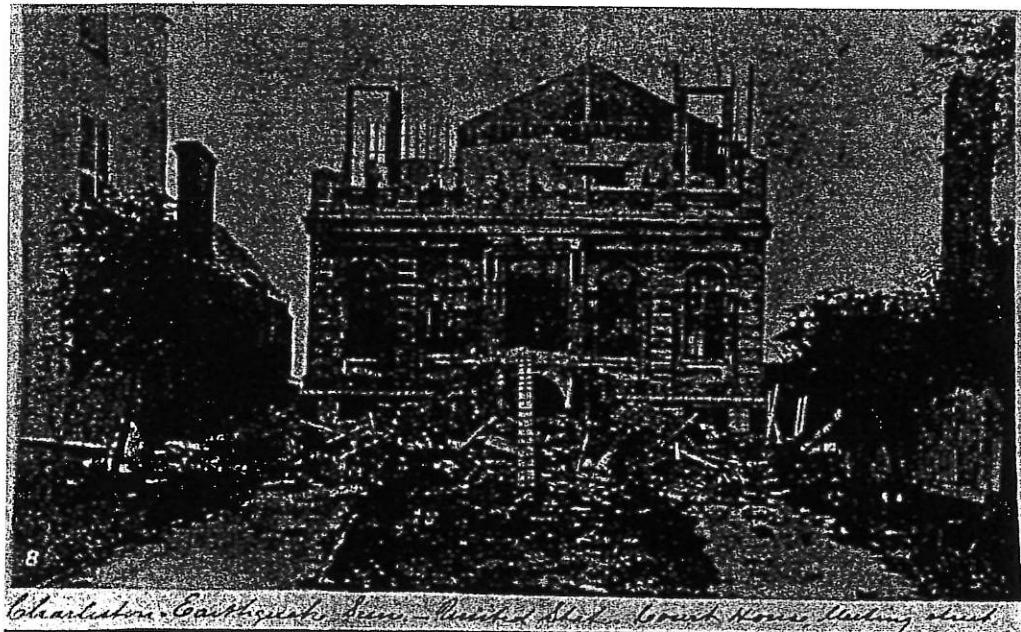
Box 44

akla

71 Meeting

The Charleston Club House
45 Meeting Street
Charleston, South Carolina
1869-1884

When the United States District Court purchased the Charleston Club House in 1869, it owned (for the first time since its establishment in 1789) a building solely dedicated to the administration of federal justice in South Carolina. The District Court met at 45 Meeting Street from 1869 to 1884. The Charleston Club building was so heavily damaged in the 1886 earthquake that it had to be demolished and the only known photograph of the building depicts that damage. At the time of the earthquake, the building, renumbered 71 Meeting Street, housed the offices of the United States Lighthouse Department. Judge George S. Bryan (1809-1895) administered federal justice in this location during the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era. The Charleston Club House was also the site of the 1868 South Carolina Constitutional Convention, January 14-March 17, 1868.



Charleston Earthquake - Seen - Ruined old Court House Meeting street

Charleston Club after 1886 earthquake

The Charleston Club was chartered in 1852 as a social club. The next year the club acquired the vacant lot behind the Charleston Guard House and hired Louis J. Barbot and John H. Seyle, architects, and Albert Elfe, contractor, to design and construct the Charleston Club House. According to an 1853 newspaper account, the building was to be two stories on a raised basement with Corinthian columns, a slate roof, of brick construction with imitation brownstone stucco covering, and large windows that could open by sliding the sashes into wall niches. The facade was a raised portico of Corinthian columns with terra cotta embellishments. A distinctive feature was the building's placement 100 feet back into the lot to provide space for a park and fountains. The modern Hollings Federal Judicial Center, built in 1987, is now on the site of the Charleston Club.

Photograph from City of Charleston Year Book (1886), compliments of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina. (No pre-earthquake pictures could be found.)

SOURCES: *Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina. Held at Charleston, S.C., beginning January 14th, and Ending March 17th, 1868* (Charleston: 1868). *City of Charleston Year Book* (1895), 376-385, George S. Bryan. *Charleston Courier*, August 27, 1853. *Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance, Deeds*, O15: 789; L15: 295. SCHS, Manuscript 35-15 February 1853. [Thomas della Torre], *A Sketch of the Charleston Club with its Constitution and By-Laws and A List of its Members, 1852-1939* [1939]. SCHS, 30-14-29 File, *Charleston Club*. Ravelen, *Architects of Charleston* (1992 ed.), 231-233. *Charleston City Directories*, 1869-1870, 1872-1873, 1874-1875, 1875-1876, 1877-78, 1882. SCHS, *Jacob Schirmer Diaries*, September 30, 1866.

**United States Customs House
200 East Bay
Charleston, South Carolina
1884-1896**

With its Roman Corinthian columns and porticoes on the east and west sides, the US Custom House is considered by many to be the most impressive Federal building in the city. It epitomizes, along with the Exchange Building at 122 East Bay, the importance of maritime history to the formation of Charleston and the state of South Carolina.

