

Predecessor Damaged In 1886 Earthquake

Nagel Building Dates From 1889

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The double building with a "metallic front" simulating brickwork at 322-324 King St. was built in 1889 by the Nagel family for their business and home.

Henry A. Nagel and his sisters, Sophia H. Nagel and Eliza H. Nagel, bought the site in a master-of-equity sale on March 16, 1887, for \$4,650.

There was on the lot at the time "a two story wooden building in front, formerly a Barber shop and in the rear a two story brick building."

The wooden building had been badly damaged in the earthquake of Aug. 31, 1886, after which the damage inspectors described it as an "Old frame building; very hazardous risk."

The two-story brick kitchen in the rear, according to the damage inspectors, was "badly cracked on east and west walls."

In late 1888 or early 1889, Henry Nagel received a city permit to construct a two-story wood and iron building at an estimated cost of \$1,500.

On Aug. 9, 1889, The News and Courier reported:

"The Nagel building, in King

Do You Know Your Charleston?

near George street, which has been so closely watched during its construction, is assuming handsome proportions. The metallic front, which was manufactured in Charleston by R.M. Masters, gives it a pretty appearance."

Henry Nagel died at age 35 in Washington, D.C., in August 1895, leaving as heirs his father, H. Adolph E. Nagel and his two sisters. The father died in 1899, leaving the daughters as heirs. Eliza Nagel conveyed her interest in the property to her sister, Sophia, in 1909.

Sophia Nagel sold the property to the Moultrie Development Co. on Feb. 8, 1911, for \$11,000. The property went through numerous hands until 1939, when it was purchased by Hyman Karesh. It remains in the ownership of Karesh's children.

City directories indicate that the father, a tailor, occupied the site of 322-324 King as early as around 1879, while his son, Henry, listed as a carpenter, was there beginning in 1881.

Although the building was heavily damaged in the 1886 earthquake, the Nagels continued to do business and reside there and they were the first to occupy the new building in 1889.

Initially, H. Adolph E. Nagel operated a dry goods and variety store at 322 King and his son operated a boot and shoe store at 324 King, while the entire family lived upstairs.

After Henry Nagel's death in 1895, his father continued to operate the dry goods store at 322 King until around 1898, when Sophia Nagel took over the operation until about 1899.

The building is a two-story wooden structure. The "metallic front" consists of three cast-iron fluted pilasters on the first level and a pressed-metal cornice, pressed-metal pedimented window cornices and pressed-metal simulated brickwork on the second level.

The original portion of the building is L-shaped, with the deeper wing at 324 King. The rear part of 324 King incorporates a two-story brick kitchen building of undetermined age, which was rebuilt after being damaged in the 1886 earthquake.

The first floor of 322 King was

expanded to the rear sometime after the building was constructed.

The second level retains the distinctive L shape. A double parlor, connected by sliding doors, extends the full width of the street front of the double building.

A single fireplace on the north end of the double parlor had a wooden mantel with pilasters having urn-shaped bases, applied moldings in the shape of half pendants, and a mantelshelf with a serpentine edge. The mantel has been moved to a fireplace downstairs.

An L-shaped corridor or enclosed piazza connects the double parlor with a large rectangular room in the ell. The rectangular room has two fireplaces, indicating it was possibly two rooms originally, although no evidence of a partition is now visible.

Behind the rectangular room is a hallway, from which a staircase formerly rose from the store at 322 King.

The former brick kitchen building is located behind the stairhall. The single room on the second floor of the former kitchen has modified Greek Revival woodwork.



Staff Photo by Wade Spees

324-322 King St.

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