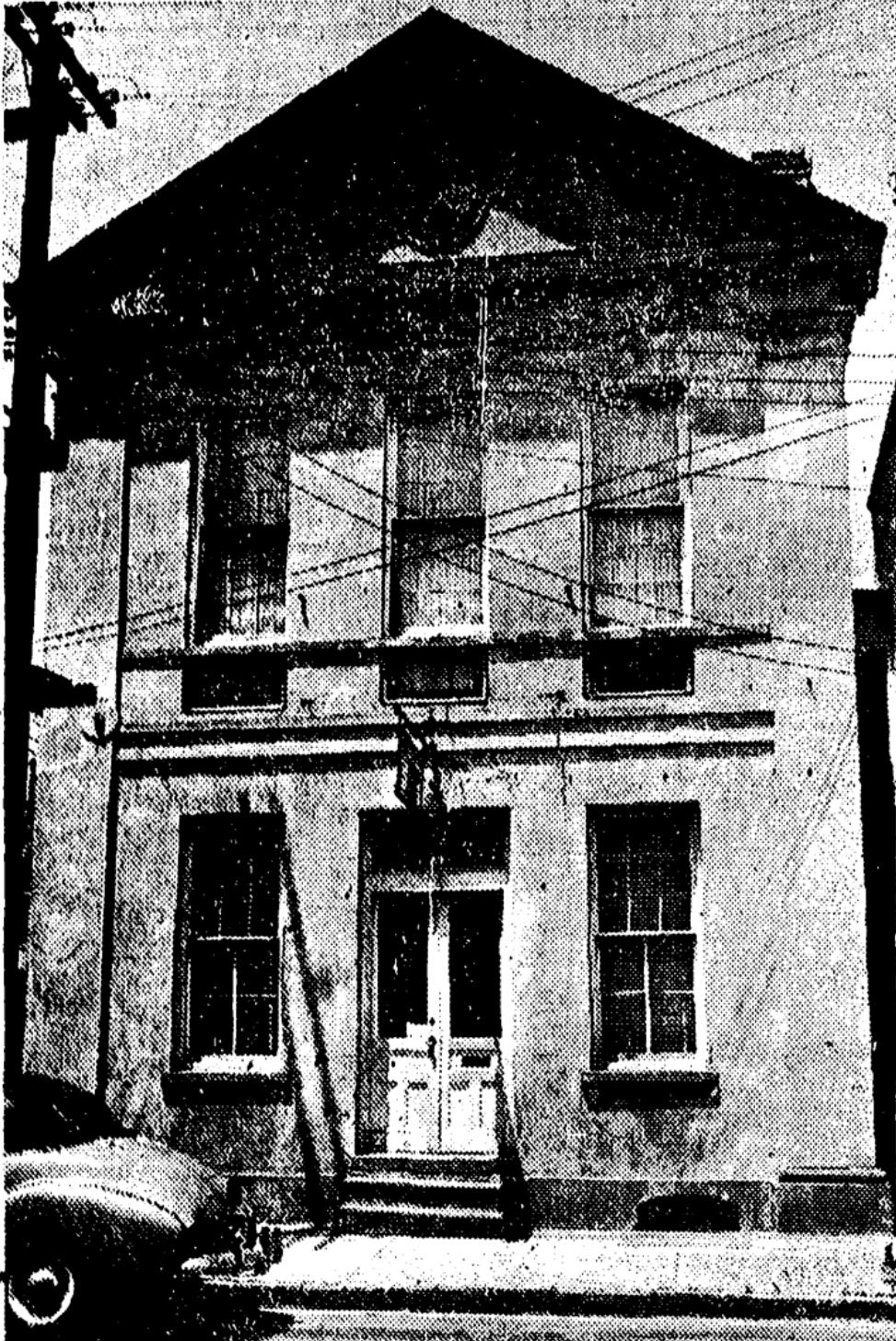


Do You Know Charleston—?

Seven State Street



OLD INSURANCE BUILDING—This structure once served as headquarters for the Union Insurance company in the days when each insurance company had its own fire engine company. (Staff Photo by Holcombe).

Insurance Companies Once Had Own Fire Engine Companies

An unpretentious little two-story building at 7 State street represents an early attempt on the part of Charlestonians to compensate for the losses occasioned by fate and death.

In the days when each insurance company had its own fire engine company, it was customary for the owner to place on his property a plate designating which company had his insurance. This was to notify that fire engine company that it was its duty to fight fire on those premises.

The Union Insurance company, established June 17, 1807, and incorporated December 19 of the same year, had its headquarters in this building. Beneath the roof is a reproduction of the company's seal, resembling the company's insurance plate, but somewhat larger.

The seal has two clasped hands in the center. At one side are several buildings and at the other, flames. Above the buildings is the word "restored" and around the outer rim, "Union Insurance Company".

Its charter permitted it to write marine and fire insurance in South Carolina and elsewhere and to lend money on bottomry, which was shipping. The charter was amended in 1837 to permit the company to write life insurance.

The company's office originally was in East Bay street, but the city director for 1819 shows that it had moved to the building in State street.

On June 5, 1830, a dinner was given in this building to Joel R. Polnsett, who had just returned after serving valiantly and efficiently as minister to Mexico.