

Artillery Hall Cornerstone Yields Up Records of 1845

Newspapers of Charleston, Sealed in Glass Jar, Tell of Ceremonies of Laying of Cornerstone for Now Demolished Building

The unearthing of the cornerstone of the German Artillery Hall, which is being torn down to provide space for the erection of a patrons' service station and auto parkway for Kerrison's, has yielded a tablet commemorating the construction of the building, four copies of Charleston newspapers dated September 30, 1845, a number of old coins and copies of an 1845 almanac and an issue of the Charleston Gospel Messenger.

Workmen finally dislodged the cornerstone, laid September 30, 1845, and firmly imbedded in the concrete of a later addition to the building, Friday afternoon. A thick green glass jar, containing the four newspapers, was broken by the pickaxes of workmen and the coins, about a dozen in number, were scarred and disfigured. Evidently the practice in 1845 was to imbed the future relics in concrete instead of intrusting them to cornerstone boxes.

The Charleston newspapers, the "Mercury," "Courier," "Transcript" and "Teutone" shed light on the history of the famous old Artillery Hall. The Charleston Courier and the Charleston Mercury both published in the issue of September 30, 1845, a notice that the cornerstone of the "Military Hall, 4th Bridge" was to be laid that afternoon. The account follows in full:

"The Board of Field Officers of the 4th Brigade intend laying the Cornerstone of the Hall about to be erected for Military purposes in Wentworth street, THIS AFTERNOON, 30 inst. They would respectfully invite their fellow citizens to unite with them in the ceremonies which will be conducted by the most worshipful Grand Lodge of American Free Masons. An address will be delivered by Major James Simons of the artillery. The procession will be formed at half past 3 o'clock, p. m., precisely, on South Bay, opposite White Point Garden, the right resting on Meeting street and will proceed up Meeting street to Wentworth street, under the direction of the following officers as marshals: Lieut. Col. J. Chas. Blum, Capt. J. H. Taylor, Capt. J. T. Welman, Capt. P. B. Lalane.

Among the military organizations taking part in the parade were the artillery regiment; the "16th Infantry and Citadel cadets;" the "Board of Field Officers of 4th Brigade," and the governor of the state of South Carolina with his staff, and a number of regular army officers.

The reverse of the cornerstone, the side turned towards the earth, bears the following:

"This stone was laid by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of American Free Masons of South Carolina. John B. Irving, Grand Master, William T. White sculpto (sculptor)."

The lettering on the handsome tablet is impeccable. The sculptor, if he scratched the stone in one place, carefully camouflaged his error. On the converse side, the tablet reads:

"The cornerstone of the Military hall of the Regiment in the Parishes of St. Philip's and St. Michael's attached to the 4th Brigade of the 2nd Division South Carolina Militia was laid 30 Sept. A. D. 1845, and in the 70th year of the Independence of the United States of America, at which time Wm. Alken was governor and commander-in-chief of the state of South Carolina.

"John Schnierle, major general of the 2nd Division, Samuel Cruikshank, brigadier general 4th Brigade, 2nd Division and field officers of the regiments in the parishes of St. Philip's and St. Michael's as follows:

"Regiment of artillery, Charles Kanepaux, colonel; Edwin B. White, lieutenant colonel, and James Simons, major.

"Sixteenth infantry, Wm. S. King, colonel; J. Charles Blum, lieutenant colonel, and A. O. Andrews, major.

"Seventeenth regiment of infantry, Frances Lance, colonel; Robert Q. Pinckney, lieutenant colonel, and James M. Walker, major.

"The building committee, Lieut. Col. R. Q. Pinckney, J. Charles Blum and Edward B. White."

At the lower left hand corner of the stone appear the words "Edward B. White, architect," and at the lower left, the words, Ephraim Curtis, builder."

The coins placed near the cornerstone and apparently imbedded in the concrete on the September afternoon when the people of Charleston gathered to witness the ceremony are of English, American and

German denominations. One coin, unique, seems to be a souvenir in protest to the United States National Bank. It is of bronze, and among its inscriptions are the following:

"The Credit and Perish Company, 1834—My Substitute for the U. S. Bank—My Victory Diminishes with the Bank."

Other coins unearthed, some which are valued far in excess of their intrinsic worth are: an American dollar (1840); an American half-dollar (1844); an American quarter-dollar (1838); a German coin, cut in half by the pickaxe of a workman, bearing the likeness of Frederick William III, and dated, 1801; an English shilling of 1816, with the stamp of the crown of England; an American copper one-cent piece (1837), the size of the current American twenty-five-cent piece; an unidentified German coin, with only the word "deutsche" legible, and an American half-dime, dated 1843.

While workmen hammered and dug in the vicinity of the cornerstone, they broke off several pieces of concrete which apparently surrounded newspaper clippings purposely placed there for safekeeping and reading by later generations. No attempt has been made yet to dislodge the clippings from their hiding places. The pick of a workman accidentally crashed the glass jar, probably hermetically sealed, which contained the four newspapers. The papers were soaked from the rains of the last few days, but parts of them were legible.

E. H. Poulnot, Jr., secretary of Kerrison's, discovered in the Charleston Courier, predecessor of The News and Courier, an advertisement by C. and E. L. Kerrison. The Kerrison store at that time was situated on the northwest corner of Market and Meeting streets, in the building which is now known as the Academy of Music. Kerrison's which has bought the German Artillery Hall property, is an outgrowth of the business firm of 1845.

Kerrison's has arranged the relics unearthed by the removal of the cornerstone in a window display on the King street side of the store.

The newspaper "Teutone," which with the three other newspapers was intrusted to the glass jar, was published entirely in the German language. The three other papers were similar in size and make-up, although the Transcript was somewhat smaller than the Mercury and Courier.

"Miller's Planters and Merchants Almanac" for 1845, was published by A. E. Miller, 45 Broad street. Brown and Miller were the printers. The other periodical found was the "Charleston Gospel Messenger and Protestant Episcopal Register."

With the removal of the cornerstone, the walls of the Artillery building, which served the public for the last time last November when it was used as headquarters for the South Carolina Teachers' Association Convention, have been levelled to within a few feet of the ground, and soon a modern filling station will arise upon the site of the building not without a distinction in history.

Conway Minister Will Be Speaker

The first outdoor service of the season will take place at Hampton park at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian association and the Laymen's Evangelistic brotherhood, with the Rev. Ernest Dugan, pastor of the Methodist church at Conway as speaker.

The Star Gospel Mission will co-operate with the two organizations in holding the meeting. The Rev. Obadiah Dugan, superintendent of the mission is a brother of the Rev. Ernest Dugan. "The Unfaithful Steward" will be the Rev. Mr. Dugan's subject.

Preceding the service, which lasts one hour, Metz' Y. M. C. A. band will give a sacred concert, beginning at 3 o'clock. The following program will be given:

March, "Genius" (Laurendeau); overture, "The Spirit of Youth," (Sordillo); voluntary, "Abide With Me," (Mank); reverie, "Sabbath Morn," (Esberger).

The concert will be given at the hand stand at the northern end of the park.

The final service in the winter series was held last Sunday in the Y. M. C. A. building. In keeping