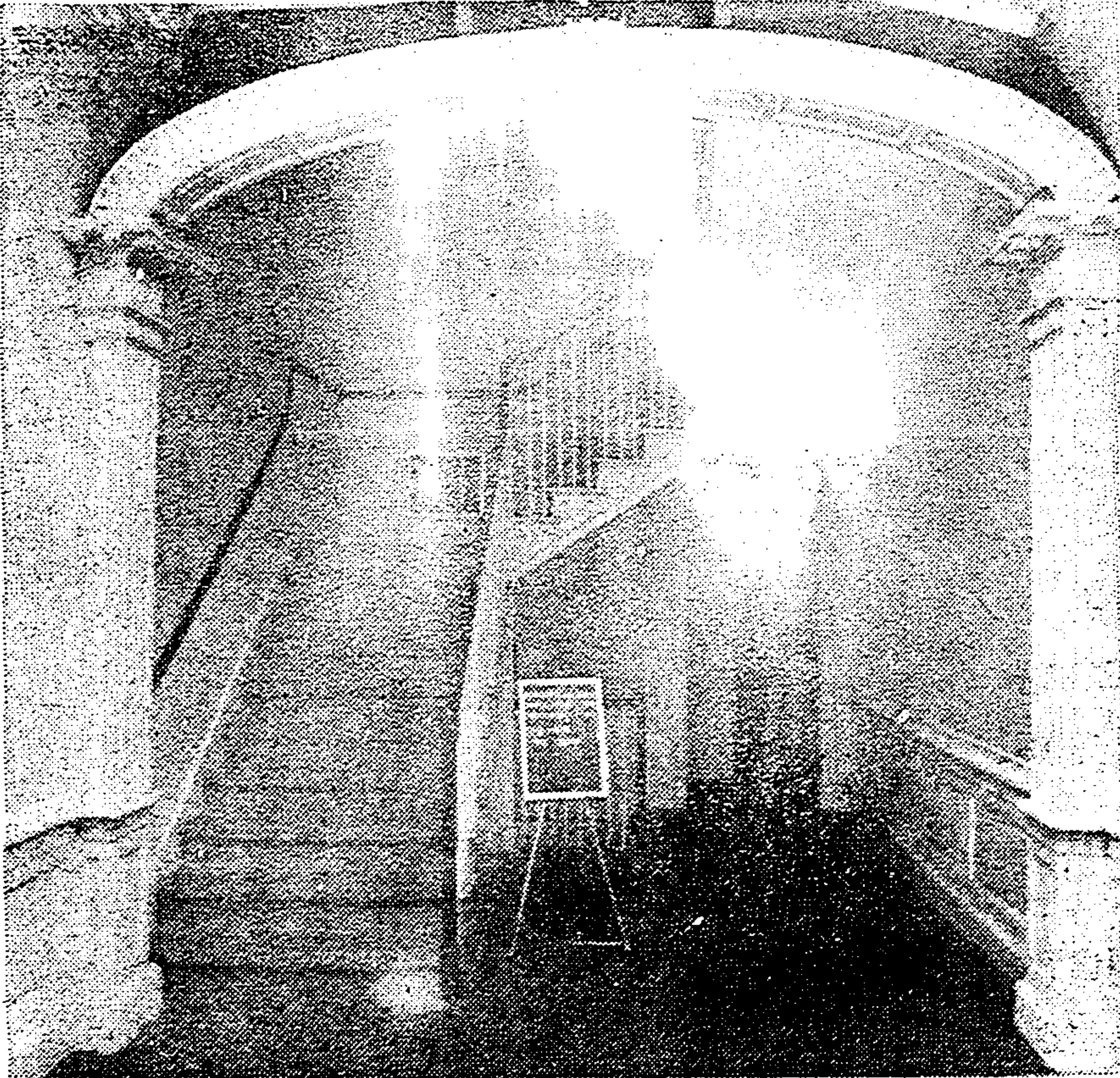


Mansion's 1910 Demolition Was Great Loss



(Staff Photo by D.J. Johnson)

Woodwork From Walker House

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

One of Charleston's great architectural losses occurred when the John Walker House at 26 George St., was demolished in 1910.

Old photographs of 26 George St. show a square three-story mansion with flanking two-story wings, and two tiers of columned piazzas extending across the front and side of the house, terminating at the wings. The piazza balustrade was matched by a balustrade around the roof.

A fence of outstanding ironwork, between massive masonry pillars, stretched across the front of the property.

Fortunately, some of the interesting Regency style woodwork was salvaged when the mansion was demolished, and installed in the Bernard Elliott House at 56 George St., where it remains.

The woodwork is typical of Charleston's Regency period, in that it retains the basic forms of the earlier Adamesque style, but manifests a greater individuality of detail and a somewhat larger scale.

Part of the decorative detail from the Walker House features an odd zig-zag design, and in one room is found woodwork with unusual barb-shaped gougework.

Walker acquired the site of the house on Jan. 8, 1824, in a Master in Equity sale, paying a high bid of \$5,110 for the then vacant lot which measured 123 feet on George Street, 120 feet on the rear on Blackbird Alley (now Burns Lane) and 362 feet in depth.

The lot had been part of the grounds of the Thomas Radcliffe mansion which stood next door at George and Meeting streets.

The city directory of 1829, the earliest extant such listing after Walker's purchase of the property, lists him in residence on the north side of George Street, second door west of Meeting.

Walker was a planter with extensive landholdings in Christ Church Parish, property in Charleston and a farm on Ashley River next to the Washington Race Course. He apparently never married, but left his considerable estate to Ann Jones, a free black woman, and his several children by her, when he died in 1840.

Five years before his death, Walker sold his mansion on George Street to Ker Boyce, on Feb. 2, 1835, for \$14,000.

Boyce, who continued to live there until he sold the mansion in 1850, was a native of Newberry District, a prominent merchant, railroad developer, banker, textile manufacturer, politician and newspaper publisher.

He sold the property, then known

The News and Courier

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as 16 George St., in 1850 to Dr. Eli Geddings, physician, for \$16,000.

Geddings was the physician of many prominent Charlestonians including William Gilmore Simms who dedicated one of his publications to him. He was also professor of anatomy at the Medical College of South Carolina and a surgeon in the Confederate Army.

He died in 1878, and the property was bought at public auction on April 29, 1879, for a high bid of \$10,050 by John C. Wieters.

Wieters, a successful merchant of German birth and a Confederate veteran, died in 1903, leaving 26 George St. and other real estate to his widow, Mrs. Margaretha H. Wieters, and their children.

The Wieters heirs sold 26 George to the Young Men's Christian Association on Oct. 1, 1910, for \$16,500. The house was demolished and the

present structure at 26 George St. was built.

The YMCA building is currently used as a classroom annex by the College of Charleston which acquired the property in 1972.

The Walker House was one of several major mansions in the vicinity which were demolished in the early part of the 20th Century.

Its neighbor to the east was the substantial mansion built about 1803 by Thomas Radcliffe, for whom the historic suburb of Radcliffeboro was named. That house was afterwards the High School of Charleston and was torn down in the 1930s for construction of the College of Charleston gymnasium. Its interior woodwork was moved to the Dock Street Theatre.

On the southeast corner of George and Meeting streets stood the mansion of Gabriel Manigault, architect of City Hall and other landmarks. The Adam style house was replaced by a gas station, built of materials salvaged from its destruction.

A substantial Victorian mansion formerly stood on the northeast corner of George and Meeting.

Morning Coffee

By Dave Doubrava

Ah, love this cool weather. It reminds me of fall up in Ohio — crisp, clear and clean. My Yankee blood stirs every time the temperature drops below 50.

I also like this weather because when it's cold, they close the back door of the bar which is right below the bedroom window of my palatial suite high above glittering downtown Charleston. When their door is closed, I am spared being serenaded by their rock and roll band every night between 9 p.m. and 2 a.m.

The proposed convention center-hotel complex on Market Street sounds good to me.

The guys over on the copy desk want me to plug their newly formed organization, the Let's Get The Devil Out Of America club.

A club spokesman tells me that the group has been formed to rid the nation, or at least the Lowcountry, of evil Devil Juice. Particularly the eight-year-old blended variety. Citizens concerned over

the dire effects of Devil Juice will be asked to send their contributions to the LGTDOOA headquarters. The club's board of directors will then proceed to buy up and consume all the Devil Juice their funds will allow. Their purpose is, of course, to keep the foul fluid out of the hands of unwary youngsters and the weak-of-will.

The LGTDOOA club's efforts are being directed by the Wrong Rev. Rollo. Bumper stickers will be appearing shortly.

I'll drink to that.

A serious plug for me. A co-worker and I are now looking into an article on whether the full moon affects people and makes them do crazy things. Although there seems to be no hard scientific evidence to prove it, people working in public safety areas — police, fire, EMS, etc. — swear that it does.

Are there any psychologists or psychiatrists out there who would be willing to express an opinion one way or the other? If so, call me here at the sweatshop.

Correction

Due to a reporter's error, it was incorrectly stated in SUNDAY that approximately \$3,000, to be paid by the city of Charleston, was the cost of plane fare for a group attending an All-America City competition in Denver. The correct amount is approximately \$1,400.

PSD Sewer Plans

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