

The News and Courier, Thurs., March 8, 1972
CHARLESTON, S. C.

Letters To The Editor

A Builder Of Republic

To The News and Courier:

W.H.J. Thomas' "Do You Know Your Charleston?" column is always a joy to read. His article of March 6 was particularly timely. It concerns a building in bad repair at 185 Rutledge Ave., now in danger of demolition, and identifies its builder as Daniel Cannon, carpenter and millwright in pre-Revolutionary Charleston.

In my opinion it would be as tragic to allow a Cannon building to vanish from the Charleston scene as it would be to smash a silver bowl created by Paul Revere. For this man, no youth at the time of the Revolution, was the oldest of Liberty Boys who, in the autumn of 1766 gathered under the Liberty Tree and celebrated the repeal of the Stamp Act. Called "Daddy Cannon" because of his age, Daniel Cannon was prominent among Charleston mechanics in opposing the oppressive measures leading to the War of Independence.

In his "Charleston's Sons of Liberty", (University of South Carolina Press, 1958 and 1963,) Robert Walsh states that Daniel Cannon "supervised the construction of the embattlement at Sullivan's Island." Thus, he planned and constructed that log fort which was the scene of the first decisive American victory. In Mr.

Walsh's book, Cannon's career is treated in considerable detail.

In an older standard work, "Traditions and Reminiscences of the American Revolution," by John Johnson M.D. (son of William Johnson, a prominent Liberty Boy and pioneer proponent of American independence) Cannon's name was listed by the last survivor of the Liberty Boys' gathering, mentioned above, as having been present under the Liberty Tree during the Stamp Act repeal celebration when Christopher Gadsden warned the group that trouble with Britain had just begun.

Tracing the survivors of the Liberty Boys group in 1851, Dr. Johnson lists Cannon's descendants as "the late Daniel Cannon Webb and many others." The Thomas Doughty listed as trustee, in Mr. Thomas' article, was also a carpenter engaged in work on Charleston's Revolutionary defenses.

The thought that a house reared by the same hands as those that built the palmetto fort on Sullivan's Island is about to be swept away seems tragic to me. If this letter can aid in saving it, by giving further information about its builder, I shall indeed be happy.

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