

14

MEMORIAL HALL

OF

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA

In Honor and Memory of those who served
from this County in defense of the
Union, 1861-1865

DEDICATED TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1910

ALLEGHENY COUNTY SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL
CHARLES O. SMITH,
LIBRARIAN.

HISTORY

OF THE

ORIGIN AND A DESCRIPTION

OF

MEMORIAL HALL

OF

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF THE SOLDIERS, SAILORS
AND MARINES FROM ALLEGHENY COUNTY WHO
SERVED IN DEFENSE OF THE UNION DURING THE
WAR FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION.

Erected by Authority of the Taxpayers of the
County, Pursuant to a Popular Vote
Provided for by Special Act of
Assembly, Approved
April 12, 1905.

IRVIN K. CAMPBELL,
J. DENNY O'NEIL,
STEPHEN J. TOOLE,
County Commissioners.

R. J. CUNNINGHAM,
County Controller.

SKETCH OF THE ORIGIN.

The movement for the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines who served in the Union Army and Navy from Allegheny County in the War for the Suppression of the Rebellion originated in the year 1891 in discussions at the meetings of the Allegheny County Grand Army Association, composed of delegates from the twenty-eight Posts of the Grand Army located in the county.

The Association finally appointed a committee consisting of Comrades Joseph F. Denniston, Thomas G. Sample, William J. Patterson, Samuel M. Duvall and Herbert H. Bengough, with direction to determine ways and means whereby the desire might be accomplished. As the work progressed the membership of this committee was increased by the Association adding thereto Comrades Albert P. Burchfield, Rev. Thomas N. Boyle, Samuel W. Hill, Frank L. Blair, Joseph W. Boyd and Charles O. Smith.

The Committee found a deep and unanimous sentiment in this community favoring the erection of a memorial, which should be of a character so imposing and impressive as to represent the wealth, intelligence and patriotic sentiment of our great industrial center, which the immortal Lincoln had referred to as the "State of Allegheny."

After careful investigation the Committee deemed it wise to secure legislative enactment to reach a proper conclusion and prepared an Act authorizing counties to erect monuments to the memory of the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines of the Civil War. This Act was presented at the session of the Legislature of 1895 by the late Senator C. L. Magee, passed, and was approved by Governor Pattison on May 22d, 1895.

Governed by this Act, a petition was presented by the Committee to two successive Grand Juries, signed by a large number of taxpayers, praying for the erection of a monument, which was unanimously approved by both bodies and so reported to the Quarter Sessions Court presided over by the late Hon. Thomas Ewing.

Failure to include in the petition an estimate of the cost of the proposed monument led the Court to disapprove the petition. The Court also took occasion to inform the Committee that they would not be inclined to approve the erection of a mere monument or shaft, and suggested that the Act be amended to authorize the erection of a Memorial Hall, which would be more in keeping with the dignity and greatness of this county.

The suggestion of the Court having met with the general and hearty approval of our citizens and survivors of the war, the Committee presented at the session of 1903 an amendment to the Act of 1895, and secured its passage, authorizing the erection of memorial halls in the several counties of the State.

Under the amended Act petitions were again presented to succeeding Grand Juries and received the

unanimous approval thereof. Pending final action by the Court thereon, the Committee decided to secure a Special Act of Assembly for the purpose, applicable to Allegheny County only, and the Special Act drafted by Comrade William A. Stone was passed in the session of 1905 and approved by Governor Pennypacker on April 12th of that year. This Act provided that upon approval of two successive Grand Juries, the Court and a majority vote of the qualified voters of the county, the County Commissioners should proceed to the erection of a Memorial Hall, the building and grounds to cost \$1,250,000.00. This amount was subsequently increased by additional legislation to \$1,562,500.00.

In 1906, the constitutionality of the Special Act was attacked, and the case was heard by Hon. John D. Shafer, Judge of Common Pleas Court, who, in an opinion, dismissed the bill, and upon appeal being taken to the Supreme Court, the decision of Judge Shafer was affirmed on the first Monday in January, 1908. The existence of the original Committee of the Grand Army Association, which secured the necessary legislation, ended with the final affirmation of the Supreme Court of the decree of Judge Shafer, and thereafter the Memorial Hall Committee assumed the duties as provided by the Special Act.

January 20th, 1906, a public meeting of the survivors of the Civil War, as provided by the Act, was held pursuant to a published notice, and the following named veterans were elected as members of the Committee of Ten of the Memorial Hall Committee:

Comrades Albert P. Burchfield, William J. Patterson, Herbert H. Bengough, Joseph W. Boyd, Samuel W. Hill, John Stulen, Rev. Thomas N. Boyle, Frank L. Blair, Charles Davis and Charles O. Smith.

On March 27th, 1906, the entire Committee, authorized by the Act, including Hon. John M. Kennedy, Presiding Judge of Common Pleas Court No. 3; Hon. R. S. Frazer, Presiding Judge of Common Pleas Court No. 2, and County Commissioners Charles B. Price, Irvin K. Campbell and James A. Clark, met and organized by electing A. P. Burchfield, President; Hon. John M. Kennedy and W. J. Patterson, Vice-Presidents; H. H. Bengough, Secretary, and F. L. Blair, Treasurer.

The site for the location having been decided upon and the ground purchased, the County Commissioners promptly invited competitive designs for the memorial building, appointing Professor Warren P. Laird, University of Pennsylvania, Consulting Architect. Out of the competitive plans presented, the award for the design went to Messrs. Palmer and Hornbostel, architects, on February 15th, 1907. The County Commissioners then advertised for proposals for the construction of the building, and the contract was awarded on November 25th, 1907.

The corner stone of the building was placed on October 2d, 1908, with imposing ritualistic ceremonies, under direction of President Albert P. Burchfield, assisted by the entire Committee. The organizations representing the survivors of the war attended in a body, together with a host of citizens from far and near. General Horace Porter, of New York, delivered an oration which was forceful and

patriotic. Short addresses were made by Hon. Charles W. Fairbanks, Vice-President of the United States; Hon. Edwin S. Stuart, Governor of Pennsylvania; Hon. Geo. W. Guthrie, Mayor of Pittsburgh, and Comrade H. M. Nevius, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, after which the exercises closed by the choir and audience singing "America."

Prior to the completion and dedication of the building, a number of the most active Comrades in the movement to secure the result attained answered the last roll call. Among these were Comrades Denniston, Sample, Duvall, Stulen, Davis and Burchfield. That they did not survive to witness the fruition of their hopes and labor was a cause of profound regret.

It having been determined that the building would be completed by October 1st, 1910, the then Board of County Commissioners, consisting of Messrs. I. K. Campbell, J. Denny O'Neil and S. J. Toole, requested that a meeting of the Committee be held to make proper arrangements for the ceremonies incident to the dedication of the memorial. An elaborate program was arranged, to include five days, to begin on Sunday, October 9th, 1910, with religious services. Comrade Charles F. McKenna, Past Colonel of Union Veteran Legion No. 1, opened the Sunday exercises and introduced Rev. Thomas N. Boyle, Past Chaplain-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, as Master of Ceremonies. Representative ministers of all the religious denominations of the county were present and joined in the services, which were solemnly impressive and strikingly patriotic.

On Monday following the religious exercises, the building was opened for inspection by the public, and the Committee on Reception, composed of over three hundred leading business men of this county, greeted and welcomed the thousands of visitors who thronged the building from early morn until late at night.

Tuesday, the dedicatory exercises proper took place, Comrade W. J. Patterson, Past Department Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, presiding. The exercises were preceded by a parade of the surviving Civil War veterans and other military organizations. The seats on the main floor of the auditorium were occupied by veterans only, presenting an imposing sight, never to be forgotten, the stage and balcony being crowded with citizens from all parts of the country. Hon. John Dalzell, in an eloquent and historical address, transferred the memorial to the care and keeping of the County Commissioners. Comrade Thomas J. Stewart, Past Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, delivered the oration, which was replete with fervor and patriotic declarations. Other addresses and patriotic instrumental and vocal music, the latter led by Mrs. J. Sharp McDonald, added interest to the great occasion.

In the evening following the dedication an old-time Camp Fire was held under the auspices of the survivors of the war, where incidents and stories associated with active service in the army were recalled and recited by Major General Daniel E. Sickles and other survivors.

Wednesday was known as "Woman's Day," a reception and entertainment being held during the day and evening under the auspices of the "Woman's Relief Corps," and the "Ladies of the Grand Army," auxiliary organizations of the survivors of the war, which was attended and enjoyed by thousands of patriotic women of the country.

On Friday evening, the exercises of the week were closed with an entertainment given by the Camps of the Sons of Veterans of this county, which was presided over by Hon. Thomas J. Ford, Judge of Common Pleas Court. Among the interesting events of the occasion was the presentation by William A. Blakeley, Esq., County District Attorney, on behalf of the Sons of Veterans Camps, of a bronze bust of Abraham Lincoln for preservation in Memorial Hall.

DESCRIPTION OF MEMORIAL HALL.

Memorial Hall is located on a city square in the eastern district of Pittsburgh known as Bellefield, having a frontage of 280 feet on Fifth Avenue, between Grant Boulevard and Natalie Street, and extending back 589 feet to Bayard Street. The building has an extreme width of 240 feet with a depth of 210 feet. The structure forms the architectural center of a large group of public buildings. The Memorial faces Fifth Avenue, looking over Schenley Park and toward the imposing "Carnegie Institute." East of the memorial are the buildings of the "University Club" and the "Pittsburgh Athletic Association," fine specimens of architecture, while to the west is the commodious "Armory of the Eighteenth Regiment, National Guard of Pennsylvania," and on the north the group of buildings of the "University of Pittsburgh," now in course of erection, and which will eventually form a splendid background of classic structures on the sloping, picturesque hillside.

The exterior of the memorial building speaks for itself in the fine illustration herewith given, and needs no description of its contour and external beauty.

The front entrance is flanked by two projecting wings, each containing a room for meetings of Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Encampment of the Union Veteran Legion, and organizations auxiliary thereto. Over the entrance is a statue in bronze, representing "America," modeled by Mr. Charles Keck. The main entrance foyer

is rectangular in form, with a barrel vaulted ceiling resting on a cornice supported by free standing columns. This foyer opens directly to the main auditorium and, on each end, to the memorial corridor extending along the three other sides of the building.

The main auditorium has a seating capacity of 2550, being 122 feet clear span in the square and 65 feet in the center of the floor to the ceiling, the floor sloping to a large stage at the rear with a seating capacity of 300. A commodious gallery extends around three sides of the room, all being lighted during the day by immense one-piece plate glass windows twenty feet high, and illuminated at night by a system which comprises Cooper-Hewitt mercury vapor lamps, Moore nitrogen vapor tubes, flaming arcs and incandescent lamps, placed above the ceiling of the auditorium and reflected down, while on the surface of the ceiling incandescent lights are placed. The ceiling is broken into panels by deep plaster soffits covering the bottom chord of the trusses which support the floor of the banquet hall above.

The banquet hall, having a seating capacity of 750 for banquet purposes, is reached by elevators and staircases, is 32 feet from floor to ceiling, 74 feet in width and 103 feet deep. A gallery extends around the upper part of this hall, under which, on each side, are the corridors giving access to the Memorial Hall Committee headquarters room, library and souvenir rooms, cloak rooms, kitchen, etc., with a promenade corridor at the front thereof.

Members and Officers of the Memorial Hall
Committee, Authorized by Act of Assembly,
from Date of Organization.

COMMITTEE OF TEN.

*Albert P. Burchfield, *Thomas N. Boyle, Frank L. Blair, Joseph W. Boyd, Herbert H. Bengough, William T. Bradberry, *Charles Davis, Samuel M. Evans,	†Christopher C. Fawcett, John A. Fairman, Samuel W. Hill, Charles F. McKenna, William J. Patterson, William T. Powell, †Charles O. Smith, *John Stulen.
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EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS.

County Commissioners.

‡Charles B. Price, ‡James A. Clark,	Irvin K. Campbell, J. Denny O'Neil, Stephen J. Toole.
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Hon. R. S. Frazer, President Judge, Court of
Common Pleas.

‡Hon. J. M. Kennedy, Judge, Court of Common
Pleas.

Hon. J. D. Shafer, Judge, Court of Common Pleas.

OFFICERS.

*Albert P. Burchfield	-	-	President.
William J. Patterson	-	-	President.
‡Hon. J. M. Kennedy	-	-	Vice President.
Hon. R. S. Frazer	-	-	Vice President.
*Rev. Thomas N. Boyle	-	-	Vice President.
Herbert H. Bengough	-	-	Secretary.
Charles F. McKenna	-	-	Asst. Secretary.

*Deceased.

‡Resigned.

‡Official term expired.

JAMES G. CHALFANT,
County Engineer.



