

NEW LEDGER BUILDING AGAIN WILL BLAZE THE TRAIL FOR ENTERPRISE AMONG NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA

Plans of Magnificent Home for Evening and Morning Public Ledgers Announced on Present Structure's Fifty-first Anniversary

IT IS just fifty-one years today since a group of the most distinguished men of the country assembled in the composing room of the present Public Ledger Building and assisted in the opening ceremonies of what was then the greatest newspaper office in the United States.

All the drawings for the building, which, when erected, will undoubtedly be the largest and most imposing newspaper home in the world, have been completed. Indeed, they were completed months ago, but the entrance of the United States into the war has prevented any practical work on the construction of the edifice itself.

On the last page of this issue is given a perspective drawing of the architects' exterior plans. It will be noticed that the general style is a happy adaptation of the Colonial, quite in keeping with the location—next to Independence Hall—and in harmony with the other great structure on the same square with the Ledgers' home—the Curtis Building.

Spaciousness a Feature Spaciousness is the distinguishing feature of the building. Here the usual type of skyscraper has been avoided, and while the structure is lofty, it will, at the same time, be so well placed that mere height will be lost to sight, and the inference of enormous space, comfort and light, to say nothing of proper ventilation, will be strongly felt.

The building will occupy the whole block bounded by Sixth and Seventh and Chestnut and Sansom streets. That gives four fronts, but the principal front will be that on Chestnut street. Here the facade will be well balanced by following the style of the Curtis Building and carrying the marble course well up into the building and setting off the facade by a row of marble columns around the main entrance.

On the first floor the visitor will enter from Chestnut street into a wide and lofty hall. At the Seventh street side he will be able to overlook the pressroom and view the fast presses turning out the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER, if the visit be paid in the afternoon, or the PUBLIC LEDGER, if he makes his visit at night.

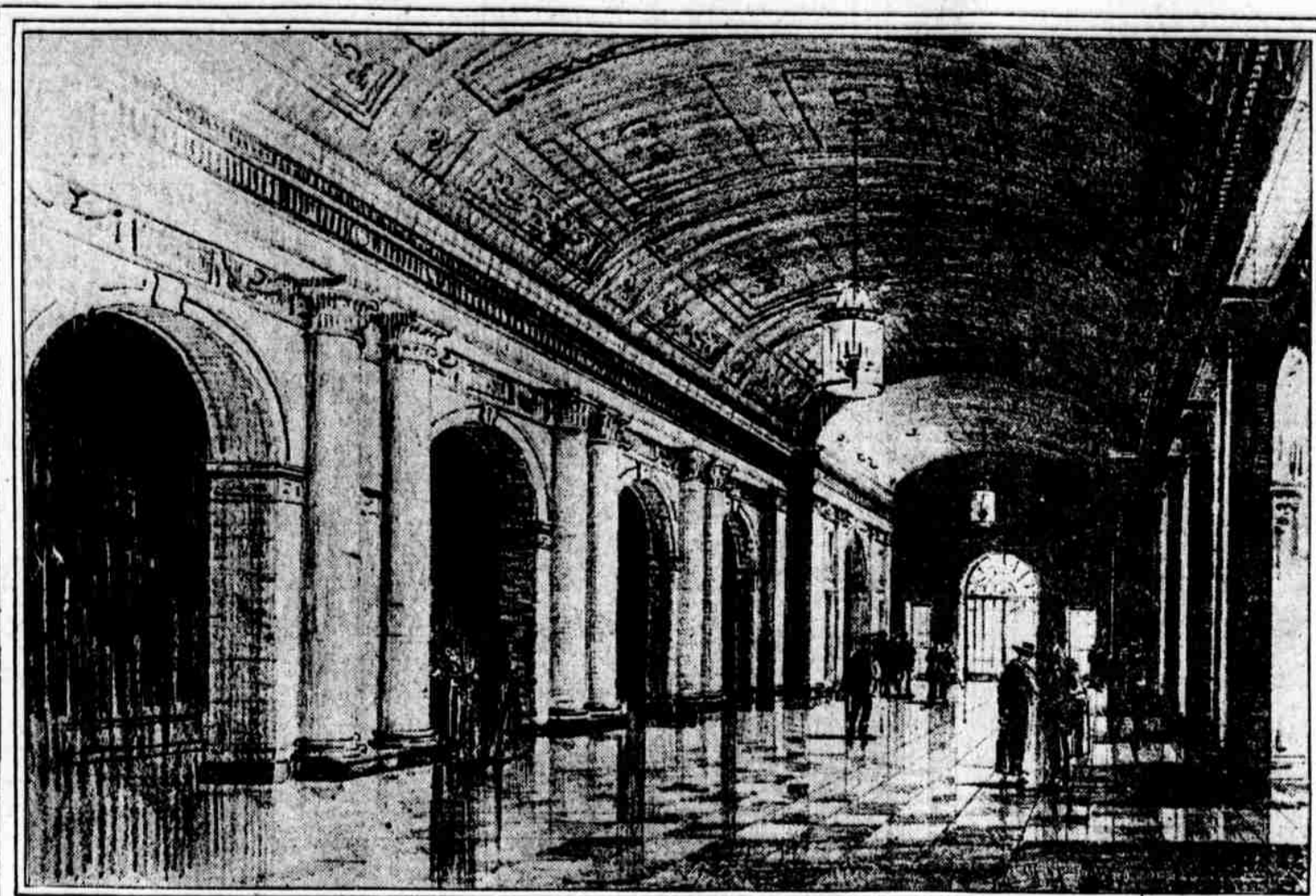
At the Sixth street end of this entrance hall will be the publication office, which will occupy all the space along the Sixth street front of the building. In the rear of the counting house will be the private offices of the business manager.

Right opposite the main entrance will be the entrance to the auditorium, a new feature in a newspaper office. Some idea of the size of the hall may be had by the assertion that it will occupy about one-third of the space of the second and third floors and will have a seating capacity as large as that of any theatre in the city.

The platform or stage will be 100 feet wide and will be fitted with an organ on which work has already begun. This organ, constructed for which were let some time ago, will be the largest in the world.

IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES MARKED OPENING OF PRESENT LEDGER BUILDING

IT IS not generally known that the late George W. Childs gave his first thoughts, after his purchase of the Ledger from Mr. Swain, to the erection of a new building for his paper. He purchased the paper in December, 1864, and having immediately set about making internal improvements in the mechanical equipment of the paper, among which was the introduction of the stereotyping process, he began to look around for a new site for a new Ledger building.



MAIN ENTRANCE HALL AS PLANNED FOR THE NEW LEDGER BUILDING

street, with a mansard roof and a central dome on the Sixth street side with smaller but similar roof adornments at either end.

The New Home Grows Sculptural ornamentations were added, including a Corinthian column at the corner, the arms of the State over the Sixth street entrance, a symbolical figure over the tablet on the Sixth street dome and a statue of Franklin, which surmounts the column at the corner of Sixth and Chestnut streets.

Philadelphia watched the gradual building of the structure, which slowly assumed form, and on June 29, 1867, the new office was ceremoniously opened. The city talked about it while the building was being put up, and for years after it was opened it was regarded as one of the sights which no visitor to the city was allowed to miss seeing.

In those days newspapers were usually published in the most unsightly quarters. None could point to an architecturally perfect and modernly equipped building. The Public Ledger Building fifty-one years ago was regarded, rather justly, as the model newspaper office. The step taken in this forward direction by its proprietor has since served as an example and there are today handsome and perfectly designed newspaper plants in various cities of the country, but the Ledger Building was the first.

Having erected such a building, there would have been distinct loss in opening business there without letting the world into the secret. That was not one of the motives of the building. Being a man who was known to the most distinguished men in the country at the time, including men in all professions and businesses, to say nothing of officials from cabinet officers down to mayors, Mr. Childs appointed an opening day and sent out invitations to men of mark everywhere.

In the accounts published in the Public Ledger at the time of the opening a great deal of stress was laid upon the novelties of construction that had been incorporated in the make-up of the building. For instance, the description of the wrought-iron columns which supported the south wing of the building over the pressroom was fitted for a masterpiece, but as a matter of fact the words were well spent, for after more than half a century these self-same columns are just as good as the day they were put in place.

As the composing room, which extended about 100 feet along the Sixth street side of the building on the fifth floor, was regarded as the model department at the time, being high and well ventilated, and also lighted by innumerable windows, it was there that the guests of Mr. Childs were assembled at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of June 20, 1867.

"At 12 o'clock precisely," runs the contemporary account of the opening, "the magnificent flag presented by the Messrs. Horstmann were thrown to the breeze, the national, State and city colors being displayed from the flagstaff. At 3 o'clock the guests began to arrive at the building, and in a short time there was a brilliant gathering of representatives of the literary, mechanical and mercantile world, together with clergymen of the different denominations, poets and authors, judges and lawyers, physicians, architects, artists, writers and publishers, were represented. Military and naval men, as well as civilians, were present, and never before in the history of Philadelphia was there seen

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more distinguished gathering of gentlemen who made their mark in the world."

A Tribute to Mr. Childs The guests, it appears, spent the time up to the appointed hour in wandering over the building, inspecting the handsome offices, and not neglecting the fine suite of the proprietor on the second floor, where he published the American Literary Gazette, and Publisher's Circular. They were amazed at the size of the press room, where they saw three great Hoe presses then usually alluded to as "Hoe's Last Past," regarded as marvels of their kind. The guests were taken from floor to floor and finally reached the fifth story.

Waiting a decent interval after the Independence Hall clock had struck the hour of four, Judge F. Carroll Brewster called the assembly to order and introduced Charles Gilpin, at the time United States District Attorney, and at one time Mayor of the city, as chairman. Mr. Gilpin in his introductory remarks spoke of his long knowledge of the Ledger. "I have known the Ledger," he said in a reminiscent mood, "throughout its whole life, 'egg and bird,' and I recall when Mr. Swain, my old friend, and I used to be about in the 'wee sma' hours' of the morning to get the news from it before the public were awake. It was a 'peppy' paper, but never 'pound foolish' paper, and the two penny policy which has been adopted by the successor of Mr. Swain, though a question of some doubt at the time, together with other changes that he made in it, has convinced the public and some of those who did not altogether agree with him in the opinion, that he was as wise, and in some things a little wiser, than his predecessor."

"In preparing for this banquet," said the Ledger the next morning, "J. H. Kingsley & Co., the proprietors of the Continental, had a carte blanche, and in execution of the order entrusted to them, they succeeded in preparing an entertainment the like of which had never been seen in Philadelphia. The splendid large banqueting room of the Continental was filled with tables spread for the guests. The rarest and choicest flowers and tasteful pyramids were interspersed with the elaborate constructions of confectionery. On the main table was a representation of the old hand press contrasted with Hoe's last Past; and perhaps the most striking feature was a representation of the New Ledger Building, constructed from materials known only to the chief caterer, and it was a capital representation of the building."

The Germania Orchestra played during the evening, and at times the Masonic Society sang choruses, and also, the reporter, mentions, the "Star Spangled Banner" was especially noted. Five Hundred Guests Present As there were 500 persons present, no list of guests was printed, but an idea of the splendor of the assemblage of distinguished men is given in the words of the Ledger's report: "Brave men and wise men—rulers of armies, cities and States—legislators and lawyers, teachers of religion, and judges of courts, authors and journalists, merchants and bankers, gathered from various States of the Union, were there hand side by side, joining in willing homage to the power of the press, and celebrating an illustrious triumph of its enterprise. Thus the sight presented was rendered no less suggestive to the thought than impressive to the sense of the beholder."

"Mayor McMichael presided, and celebrated as he is for tact and genial humor in giving happy direction to all the proceedings at social and festive meetings, it was a subject of universal remark that his felicitous and admirable management on this occasion could not have been surpassed. The pleasures of the evening were enjoyed by a number of ladies as well as the distinguished body of representative men already referred to. The ladies were assembled in an adjoining parlor, where a sumptuous dinner had been set by Mr. Kingsley, and after it was over, they adjourned to the large dining hall, and spent the remainder of the evening in listening to the admirable speaking that marked the occasion.

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And it is a striking example of what patient application intelligently directed can do," he continued, "that an apparently hopeless undertaking, begun with soiled means, under serious disadvantages, has, within the memory of many who hear me, largely enriched its projectors, and that the little obscure office in the old Arcade has been replaced by the palatial establishment—so long and so nobly upheld—the fame of its structure, so ornate in its embellishments and so perfect in its appointments—was once so recently visited and examined."

"For this last we are indebted to the munificence of Mr. Childs, and while we are under special obligations to the beautiful edifice thus added to our city, his brethren of the press everywhere owe him grateful praise for the costly monument he has erected to the dignity, importance and value of our profession." The chairman then introduced Joseph B. Chandler, "my venerable friend, who so long and so nobly upheld the fame of the newspaper nearly fifty years ago," said Mr. Chandler, "the simple hand press that gave two hundred and fifty editions of the Public Ledger for all its manhood upon the office; but an increase of general interest and of business rendered necessary some additional means, and one new press after another was invented and used, till finally—and I suppose it is hardly a matter of five years—came a long distance with no little personal inconvenience to themselves, have so kindly responded to his call. Rapidly reviewing the early history of the Public Ledger, Mayor McMichael spoke of Mr. Childs' long-cherished wish to possess the paper. He

BRITONS HERE MONDAY

The British medical delegation to the United States, acting as advisers in the development of the United States Medical Corps, will visit the city next Monday instead of Wednesday, as originally planned. The delegation consists of Sir Arbuthnot Lane, St. James' Hospital, London; Colonel Herbert A. Bruce, Royal Army Medical Corps, and other members of local medical organizations, and prominent physicians, will be present.

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