



JAMES RENWICK, A.M., F.A.I.A.

PROCEEDINGS

OF

The Twenty-first Annual Convention

OF THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

HELD IN

CHICAGO, OCTOBER 19th, 20th & 21st, 1867.

The Twenty-first Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects was held at Chicago, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, October 19th, 20th and 21st, 1867, in the rooms of the Art Institute, in the Art Institute, corner of Michigan and Dearborn streets.

FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MORNING SESSION.

The Convention was called to order by J. C. Vose, President of the Institute of New York, who took the Chair and delivered the address:



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The Convention was called to order by First Vice-President Edward H. Kendall, of New York, who took the Chair and delivered the following address :

F Ord, Jno.	Philadelphia.
A Otis, W. A.	Chicago.
A Pashley, A. F.	Chicago.
F Powell, W. B.	Philadelphia.
F Preston, W. G.	Boston.
F Rapp, G. W.	Cincinnati.
F Ricker, N. C.	Champaign, Ill.
F Root, J. W.	Chicago.
F Scofield, L. T.	Cleveland.
F Shipman, S. V.	Chicago.
F Silsbee, J. L.	Chicago.
F Smith, A.	Chicago.
F Smith, W. C.	Nashville.
A Sullivan, L. H.	Chicago.
A Taylor, E. H.	Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
A Treat, S. A.	Chicago.
F Wallingford, C. A.	St. Paul.
F Walter, E. L.	Scranton, Pa.
A Wicks, W. S.	Buffalo.
Wight, P. B.	
Corresponding Member	Chicago.
F Willett, J. R.	Chicago.

VISITORS AT THE CONVENTION NOT MEMBERS OF THE
INSTITUTE.

Alexander, J. F.	La Fayette, Ind.
Brodie, C. H., <i>A. R. I. B. A.</i>	London, England.
Brown, W. R.	Cincinnati.
Charnley, F. L.	Chicago.
Cobb, H. I.	Chicago.
Flanders, J. J.	Chicago.
Frost, C. A.	Chicago.
McLean, R. C., <i>Editor Inland Architect.</i>	Chicago.
Meyer, C. H., <i>Editor Engineering and Building Record.</i>	New York.
Patton, N. S.	Chicago.

SKETCH OF THE PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF JAMES
RENWICK, F. A. I. A.

The frontispiece to this issue presents the portrait of one of the Nestors of architectural practice in America, James Renwick, whose long professional career, animated by great love for his art, and practicalized by close attention to business obligations and detail, has enabled him to execute perhaps a larger number of structures of various kinds than any other architect in this country.

Mr. Renwick was born in the City of New York, and graduated when seventeen years old, from Columbia College. His early predilections for architectural study were carefully fostered by his father, Professor James Renwick, who occupied the chair of Chemistry and Mechanics, and their allied sciences, in that venerable seat of learning, and was himself an adept in architectural design, having planned the alterations of old Columbia College, and several other buildings.

After graduating, the subject of this sketch, desiring to gain a thorough knowledge of the practical side of his proposed profession, obtained an appointment as engineer on the western division of the Erie Rail Road. He remained in this position about a year, and finding that he was not getting the instruction in applied mechanics that he desired, he sought and obtained the position of Assistant Engineer on the Croton Aqueduct, and was employed in superintending the construction of the distributing reservoir for about four years. After leaving the aqueduct, at the age of twenty-three, he entered the competition for Grace Church, and his plans were selected and adopted by the vestry. The building of Grace Church occupied his time for two years, when he was selected as the architect of Calvary Church and the Church of the Puritans. In that "day of small things" as regarded appropriations in the interest of Art, he was, in the case of both of these structures, limited to an expenditure of not over

forty-five thousand dollars, and was thus placed of course at a great disadvantage, as regarded opportunity for the display of his acquirements in architectural design. Our younger practitioners can in fact but faintly realize probably how distasteful was the task imposed on such pioneers of the profession as Mr. Renwick, in being compelled, from pecuniary considerations, to cut down their designs sometimes to mere outline of style. They were often indeed mainly sustained by the hope that the results of their struggles, however meagre as compared with their conceptions, would gradually, while cultivating the taste of their clients, advance that of the public and pave the way for future opportunities to architectural aspirants.

Mr. Renwick's practice was now continually increasing, and his commissions covered all kinds of structures. At the age of twenty-seven he was chosen by the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution as one of the competitors for their proposed building and his designs were adopted and executed. The Board of Ten Governors of Charities and Correction of the City of New York appointed him their architect and he remained in this position for many years, during which he planned and supervised the construction of the Work-House, the City Hospital, the Small-Pox Hospital on Blackwell's Island, the Inebriate Asylum and (for the Commissioners of Emigration) the Lunatic Asylum,—the two last on Ward's Island,—the Children's Hospital on Randall's Island and several buildings of lesser importance.

In 1853 Archbishop Hughes selected Mr. Renwick's design for the Roman Catholic Cathedral, still in process of erection on the 5th Avenue, having been commenced in 1858. During the construction of this monument to his professional reputation Mr. Renwick has several times visited Europe, making the contracts for the high altar and stained glass while there.

His principal buildings, in addition to those above mentioned, are St Bartholomew's, St. Stephen's, the Church of the Covenant, the Second Presbyterian Church on the corner of 5th Avenue and 21st Street, all in New York City, the Vassar Female College at Poughkeepsie, the Corcoran Art Gallery and Corcoran Building at

Washington, the old Tontine Building, the Fulton Bank, the Bank of the State of New York, the alterations and new front of the Stock Exchange, all in New York City, besides many city houses, among which may be named those of D. Willis James, Frederick Gallatin, Charles Morgan, Cortlandt Palmer, Robert Remsen in New York, and the country houses of W. H. Townsend and David Thompson in Staten Island, Renwick Castle at Syracuse, and many others at Dobbs Ferry, Tarrytown, Lenox, New London, and Newport. He is also architect of the Clarendon, Albemarle, St. Denis and several other Hotels in New York, and has built churches in all parts of the United States.

In the design of St Ann's in Brooklyn, the Young Men's Christian Association Building in New York, and the very fine Renaissance *façade* of Booth's Theatre which, for a number of years, adorned the same city, but which was torn down two or three years ago to make room for the march of commerce, (the present structure however, it is gratifying to observe, retaining that *façade's* bust of Shakespeare, as a memorial of a very interesting building), Mr. Renwick was largely assisted by the late Mr. Joseph Sands, his partner for a number of years; but to Mr. Renwick was due the design of the interior construction of the theatre, which will be remembered as unique in this country, at the time of its inauguration, for height of ceiling; while critics were unanimous in commendation of its interior construction, its excellent acoustic properties and the fact that every seat in the house commanded a view to the back of the stage; this last result, it may be well to state for the encouragement of students and the edification of the public, being attained only after incessant study and experiment, consuming nearly a month's time.

Mr. Renwick, who has been a Fellow of the Institute from its foundation, as well as a Practicing Member of its New York Chapter, is still in the active practice of his profession, assisted by several junior partners, all of whom were educated in his office.