

# Old Brick Capitol Proof Found

Cement Covering Removed to Reveal Type of Masonry Characteristic of Period of Construction of Building.

BY JOHN CLAGETT PROCTOR.

At last the fact has been established beyond any question that at least a part of the Old Brick Capitol, at the southeast corner of A and First streets northeast, is the original building erected in 1815 by a Washington syndicate to house Congress after the burning of the Capitol by the British on August 24, 1814.

The writer, in looking the building over, found that some enterprising person had pecked away the cement mortar covering the front and north side of the building, and had exposed enough of the brick work to show that it was laid in the Flemish bond manner, typical of that so extensively used in brick construction in this country even down to as recent as 1840.

## Must Await Razing.

Just how much of the original walls still exist will not be known until the mechanics begin razing the building, but it is believed, as generally contended, that the north and east walls—except where the present windows and doors were placed when the struc-

ture was remodeled—are of the original building and were not destroyed by the contractors, Dearing and Morsell, when they remodeled the building into three dwellings in 1867 for George P. Brown, sergeant-at-arms of the Senate.

Indeed, much of the belief in the originality of the building has heretofore been based on The Star's statement of July 13, 1867, in which it is said:

"The old brick Capitol.—The contractor for converting the old brick Capitol, now the property of Mr. George P. Brown, sergeant at arms of the Senate, into three dwellings was yesterday awarded to Messrs. Morsell and Dearing."

## Some Still Doubtful.

However, this was not satisfactory many ho contended that the entire building was razed and that "Brown's row," as it was called by some, was erected from the ground up, and even the word of living witnesses present at the remodeling availed nothing. But

now the indisputable facts present themselves, and the old wall, in all its old-time glory, is seen again as it has not been seen for more than 60 years, and we know that it is really a part of the old brick Capitol where Congress met from 1815 to 1819, where James Monroe was inaugurated in 1817, and where John C. Calhoun died in 1850. The fact that it was used as a prison for political offenders during the Civil War is, of course, well known.

Knowing that Herndon Morsell, the well known singer, was the son of S. T. G. Morsell, who as a partner of G. T. Dearing had the contract for remodeling the brick Capitol, the writer got in touch with that gentleman, who said that he always understood from his father that the old brick Capitol was only remodeled and not rebuilt, and if seeing is believing, then the picture of the wall as here shown should settle the matter for all time.

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