

BIRTH OF HOTEL IDEA

First Meeting of Citizens Held Half A Century Ago—The Need a Problem Then

Fifty years ago, in the fall of 1867, a number of Columbia citizens met in the old Boone County Courthouse. They were representative men of the town at that time. Their purpose was to discuss a problem which, even in these days, was considered an important one—the need of a new hotel. Their chairman was Colonel W. F. Switzler. In the audience was J. L. Stephens, and his son, E. W. Stephens, then a boy.

In February, on the night of the twenty-ninth in 1916 in the new Boone County Courthouse, which stands on the same ground on which the old courthouse stood, another meeting to consider the prospects of a new hotel was held. This time, it was not merely a meeting of discussions. It was not ended with a hope but rather with a certainty. A new hotel was assured in Columbia and a bonus of \$20,000 was subscribed by many of Columbia's citizens to a fund to help in the building of the new Daniel Boone Tavern, which had been the name chosen for the new hotel.

Origin of Its Name a Mystery.

An unsolved mystery may go down in the history of the new hotel propaganda. E. W. Stephens, chairman of the committee of citizens who helped raise the bonus, claims the honor of suggesting the word "tavern" as a part of the official name of the hotel. There was a great deal of discussion on the part of the committee. It is said that at first Mr. Stephens' proposal to use the word "tavern" was laughed at but later it was accepted. But who suggested "Daniel Boone" as part of the hotel name apparently will remain a mystery in the history of Columbia.

"We just noticed that someone had started it when we saw the name 'Daniel Boone Hotel' printed in the newspapers," said one member of the committee recently.

Most everyone agrees that it seemed a foregone conclusion from the very beginning of the actual business to call the new hotel after the great pioneer for whom the County of Boone was named.

The citizens who subscribed the

\$20,000 as a bonus for the builders of the hotel were represented by a committee of which E. W. Stephens was chairman, and on which were the following Columbians: Judge J. A. Stewart S. F. Conley, L. M. Defoe, President A. Ross Hill, John N. Taylor, R. B. Price, Jr., C. B. Rollins, C. B. Miller and W. W. Payne. It was thought that, with \$20,000 invested in the proposition the citizens who had invested should be represented in the building of the tavern and so when on April 15, 1916, the contract for a \$100,000 five-story fireproof hotel building was signed with the L. W. Dumas, Jr., Construction Company it was arranged to have all plans and work done approved by the committee.

W. S. Williams Supervises Work.

Prof. W. S. Williams of the School of engineering was named by the committee to represent the townspeople in supervising the work of the building company and from July 1, 1916, to June 1, 1917, Mr. Williams served. Soon after the bonus money was turned over to the construction company, plans drawn by A. N. Torbitt of Springfield were approved by the committee, and work on the building was begun. One of the few points of difference among members of the committee was whether or not the hotel should be 70 feet or 100 feet in width. Mr. Stephens, the chairman maintained that it should be built large enough to provide for a future growth and despite some doubt on the part of a few others, finally won out and the plans for a structure 113 feet wide by 88 feet deep were approved.

Soon after the work of building the new hotel was started, L. W. Dumas, Jr., who had planned the building and had done practically all the work of outlining the contracts, died. The work of completing the structure was taken up by L. W. Dumas, Sr. Boyle Clarke was made president of the Columbia Hotel Company which was formed immediately afterwards and since that time has assisted in the advisory capacity.

Built in Eighteen Months.

Last Saturday night, eighteen months after the movement to build

was discussed, practically the same committee that met and planned the hotel even before work on the excavation had begun, met again, this time in the reception room, adjoining the ballroom in the completed new Daniel Boone Tavern. Outside, in the halls, the people of Columbia inspected the work of the hotel company and praised it, while an orchestra in the lobby downstairs played for the crowd which grew bigger as the evening wore on. Instead of spending the \$100,000 required of them the Dumas Construction Company had spent \$165,000, and Columbia, from the smallest boy who followed his parents through the corridors to the oldest citizen of Columbia, had only words of congratulation for the town, the hotel management and most of all, for the people who had made the Daniel Boone Tavern a reality.

At the conclusion of the banquet which was given in honor of the committee on the opening night, E. W. Stephens, as chairman of the townspeople's committee gave his description of the new \$165,000 hotel building as follows:

"An examination of the building will demonstrate its practicability. It is fireproof and finely arranged; the dining room is large and ample; the kitchen is so located as to be convenient to the dining room and the coffee shop. The tavern has a spacious and well lighted lobby and a convenient writing room, all admirably adapted to their purposes. There is no wasted space in the building. The rooms are not large but are ample for transient patronage.

"The Mezzanine floor is especially uniquely arranged, but the finest feature is the banquet room which simply cannot be surpassed. The new hotel will help make Columbia continue to be what it has always been, namely a city of hospitality."

HERE'S THE CHEF



C. E. Wallace, new head chef at the Daniel Boone Tavern comes from Kansas City where he has been "swing" chef at the Muehlbach Hotel since it opened. "Swing" chef means in the language of hotel people one who plays first "understudy" to the main chef, and can also fit into most any other vacancy that occurs in a big hotel kitchen. Wallace presides over the new tavern kitchen, and supervises menus for the hotel dining room and the Coffee Shop. His work along these lines has already received considerable praise from the numerous diners at the new hotel.

A PLACE FOR CONVENTIONS

New Ballroom Will Help Bring Big Meetings Here, Merchants Believe.

That the ball room of the new hotel will be a great help to Columbia's Commercial Club in bringing conventions here is the opinion of many merchants each year but it is thought that this number will undoubtedly be

increased when the accommodations of the new Daniel Boone Tavern are known throughout the state. Last year there were press, medical, law and teachers conventions here, in addition to Farmers' Week and Journalism Week, two University activities.

The ballroom may also be used for receptions, banquets and for private dinner parties.

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