PART 2 | DESERET EVENING NEWS. | 9 TO 12

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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St. Louis Up to Date

New Facts About the Convention Hall Gathered on the Ground From the Architect and the National Republican Committee

Two Hundred Thousand Tickets and How They Will Be Distributed—A Beautiful Souvenir—Graphic Pen Pictures of the Interior of the Hall—The Demands of the Newspapers and for Souvenir Daily Telegraphic Dispatches—The Crowd Estimated at 150,000—St. Louis' Railway Facilities and Its Big Depots.

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ST. LOUIS, April 14th, 1896.

I HAVE COME from Washington to St. Louis to give you a bird's-eye view of matters relating to the Republican convention. I am fortunate in having been here at the same time as Colonel Joe Manley, the leader of the Reed forces; Colonel William H. Hain McKinley's chief adjutant; Congressman Clarkson, the leader of the Allison movement, and Senator Tom Carter, who is for the Republican party in general. These men have put field headquarters here, and they have underground a number of things which have been once decided, settled. They have already the enthusiastic plans of the hall, and the plans already published in the newspapers have been modified to make them better suited to the purposes of the convention. The sketch you saw with this letter shows the convention building as it will be actually when completed. The ground has been broken, the foundations are laid, and a large gang of laborers are now busy putting it up. I went out to look at the work this morning. The building is not far from Union depot and within a few seconds' ride of the business district. It is just north of the new city hall and is surrounded on two sides by street car lines, which connect it with every part of the city. When I visited it hundreds of laborers were at work. A steam saw was at work merrily screeching as it cut the lumber which is soon to resound with the clapping of tens of thousands of enthusiastic hands. A hundred hammers were pounding nails and a hundred odd carpenters were cutting and fitting the great timbers into place. The work goes on rapidly. It must go very rapidly in order that the hall be finished in time. It will be completed within two months and when finished it will look as solid as though it had consumed a year in building. It is, you know, to be covered with staff, the same material as that which formed the outside of the World's Fair structures at Chicago. This staff covered will be nailed on to the woodwork in square blocks, making the convention hall look like marble, save that its outside steps will be of wood.

THE CONVENTION HALL.

The expense of the building will, you know, be paid by St. Louis. It will cost $75,000. The architect's contract is for $65,000, but at least $10,000 more will be required to finish up the interior. Notwithstanding this, the building will have a life of only six months. It is being erected on land devoted to the new city hall, and the contract provides that every bit of it shall be removed by October 1st.

Let us stop a moment and take a look at this $75,000 edifice on the river in passing politics. First, its surroundings. It will be a palace rising out of a lot of tenements, shanty buildings of brick and frame. It will have as its architectural neighbor the magnificent new city hall, of granite and terra cotta brick, which has cost more than one million dollars, and which is one of the finest of the public buildings of the United States. The city hall and the convention building occupy one large square, containing, I judge, about four acres of ground. The elevation is about six feet above the street, and there is quite a large space running about the buildings between them and the sidewalks. The shabby house I spoke of is across the opposite side of the street surrounding the city hall block. They look like second-class to great houses. At one corner there is a saloon, and just opposite the main side of the convention hall there is a vacant lot, fenced by a ragged bill board plastered over with painted advertisements of "relief" rum, long tobacco and special brands of whisky.

The building will cover more than an acre of ground.

Do you know how big an acre is?

Many city blocks are not so large. Well, the convention building will cover more ground than an acre and it will look like a great four-story marble building with an extra story or canopy rising from its top in the shape of a ridge roof. This canopy will be made of glass so as to admit light. It will be nearly half an acre in area and will cover the space in the center of the convention hall, which has been assigned to the delegates and the alternates. It will be so made that the glass can be raised, giving the hall perfect light and an through ventilation around as though it was no roof to the sky. In addition to this, there will be a series of ventilating fans, which will keep the air within the hall in cool and motion. The sides of the hall will have many windows and there will be more than one hundred doors and entrances. It is expected that the hall should be emptied within two minutes if a panic should occur.

In going over the plans with one of the architects, I asked as to the strength of the structure. He told me there was no danger whatever of its not being able to hold the people and to stand any kind of a strain. "Put it," said he, "the roof is strong as it is and we put everything well in built in the most substantial manner. It will be entirely safe. But a brigade of men will be necessarily on hand with their engines and hose, and the least sign of fire will be detected by the watchmen."

THE SEATING CAPACITY.

The hall will seat 15,000 persons. It will have, it is said, the largest seating capacity of any building ever erected for a convention, with perhaps, the exception of the hall in which James A. Garfield was nominated in 1880. This is said to have had 15,000 seats. The Minneapolis convention hall had about 10,000 seats, and a great part of the view in that hall was shut off by posts and pillars. There will be no such posts in this hall. I am told that every seat will be a good one, and that the acoustic properties of the hall will be good. The seating boards will be such that all can hear. Each seat will be a chair, and about 75,000 chairs will be bought for the occasion. The seats will be arranged in the shape of a rectangular amphitheater. They will run up on four sides of the square pit which forms the ground floor, rising to the back walls of the building, in two great tiers or rows, will or the spectators. The floor and the lower tiers will seat about 1,000 persons. The upper tier will seat about 14,000 persons