

ST. JAMES BUILDING
117 West Duval Street
Jacksonville
Duval County
Florida

HABS No. FL-353

HABS
FLA,
16-JACK,
14-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

St. James Building

HABS No. FL-353

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Location: 117 West Duval Street, Jacksonville, DuVal County, Florida.
USGS Jacksonville Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.436650-3355310.

Present Owner: St. James Realty and Department Store.

Present Occupant: May-Cohen Department Store, St. James Realty Co., and various medical and dental offices.

Present Use: Retail department store and offices.

Significance: On the order of Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott store in Chicago in scale, functional planning, and decoration, The St. James Building featured a 75' octagonal glass dome and was considered to be a showplace by its designer, H. J. Klutho, Jacksonville's most prominent early twentieth century architect.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1912 (Klutho pamphlet).
2. Architect: H. J. Klutho (1873-1964). Klutho brought the form-follows-function gospel of Louis Sullivan and the Prairie School stylistic earmarks of Frank Lloyd Wright to Florida. Having studied at Wright's Oak Park, Illinois, studio around the turn of the century (Meister), Klutho came to Florida to rebuild "about \$10 million" worth of Jacksonville's central business district which had been destroyed in a fire in 1901. Between 1901 and 1920, during his most Chicago-School influenced phase, he erected scores of commercial buildings and prestigious residences throughout greater Jacksonville. Before his death in 1964, he himself summed up his design philosophy thus:

"Most works of art or architecture are undoubtedly marked by the influence of some master. I followed closely the work of many masters in my time and feel that I was particularly influenced by both Sullivan and Wright. I do not feel that I, in any way, became a copiest-but do know that their influence is evident in some of my handiwork. However, I am sure that I displayed enough originality to have my work dubbed Kluthoesque.

Design is of paramount importance. A project should be so designed as to indicate its function. A church, a school, a hospital, a public building or an office building should each be recognizable as such, a project should be made to harmonize with its environment, even to the extent of altering the environment where practicable to produce the harmonious whole. We can find suggestions and inspiration from creators of the past and present. We should study and profit by their experience without allowing ourselves to ape them (Carry).

Concerning his earlier, most original or historical work, he wrote:

"Our homes should be built with overhanging eaves to shade the windows from the sun. It also allows the windows to remain open during our rainy season when rain is accompanied frequently by driving winds.

Plenty of ventilation should be provided for between the roof and ceiling.

Southern California has evolved a distinctive style and somehow this style suits their climate.

We in Florida have three times as much rain fall as California and longer summers.

A composite style consisting of a little Spanish Mission and a touch of Italian villa architecture would suit us far better than the steep-roofed New England cottage with little overhang, small windows and small porches. The same may be said of the colonial type. They simply don't fit in.

A ride through the state and its towns and cities shows the same monotonous and uninteresting buildings, both public and private; one sees in any of the Northern and Middle Western cities, a regular Sinclair-Lewis Main-Street architecture, stupid and uninteresting.

While this is difficult to change in the North and Middle West because there the population is settled and has become used to it for a century or more and so new developments are naturally slow.

But here in Florida where new towns spring up over night and development is in its infancy a special effort should be made to introduce a style of architecture better fitted to the environment. More color should be used and all building material that looks dark and sombre should be tabooed.

It should be so striking as to be distinctive and as such would become a wonderful asset as an advertising factor for the state." (Carry)

After about 1925, his works such as the Love-McGinnis Residence (see HABS No. FL-347) are less original, but still functional, betraying a reliance on historical styles similar to that of the popular Palm Beach architect Addison Mizner.

The Florida AIA had lauded his work, and if the Cohen's St. James Building (see HABS No. FL-353) and the Germania Club alone of his oeuvre received national notice, it has been suggested that this was solely due to Klutho's relative isolation in the Deep South (Bussard). A monograph on Klutho by Robert C. Borward of Jacksonville is forthcoming.

According to Clarke's Florida Biographical: Henry J. Klutho was born at Breese, Illinois, March 19, 1873, a son of Theo and Anna (Moliter) Klutho, the former landowner and lumber dealer. After acquiring his education in the parochial school he further qualified for the practical duties of business life by a course in a commercial college at St. Louis, where he studied for a year and a half, his father believing a business career the safest one. His experience in commercial circles, however, did not appeal to him and proved that work of that character was not as congenial as he believed it would be. Another writing of him said: "His tastes were artistic and having a constructive mind building especially interested him. He always viewed the operations of builders with more or less interest, and one day while walking along one of the principal streets of St. Louis he came to a huge building in the course of construction. Two of the men employed thereon were holding between them the plans of the building and were engaged in an animated conversation. As he looked at the drawings and saw there every detail of the big building in miniature, conceived and all worked out intelligently before even a stone was laid, he became forcibly impressed with and attracted to the work, and he decided there and then to become an architect."

Having formed this determination, he took the first necessary step by enrolling as a student in Schenk's Drawing Academy. A year was devoted to the study of architectural drawing and he then obtained practical experience in architects' offices in St. Louis for three years. Then the mecca to which all architectural students of the time turn beckoned him and he went to New York to further qualify for his chosen profession. He devoted four years to study and practical experience in the metropolis under such eminent architects as Francis H. Kimball, Clinton & Russell, W. Wheeler Smith and others and then traveled for a year

abroad in Italy, Germany, France and London, studying and sketching. In 1899, he entered upon his professional career in New York, and in June 1901, arrived in Jacksonville, Florida, a month after the great fire which had laid waste to much of the city. From the outset he was accorded a liberal clientage, his business growing as he gave practical demonstration of his power to plan and construct buildings that combine all the phases of utility, comfort, convenience, and beauty. The evidence of his skill, knowledge and ability are seen in a number of Jacksonville's most prominent structures, including the City Hall, the Board of Trade Building, the Public Library, the Young Men's Christian Association Building, the Dyal-Upchurch Building, the Clark Building, many of the finest residences and several churches. Moreover, he was the architect of the first ten story, fire-proof building the beautiful Shriners' Temple and Germania Club--all in Jacksonville. The design that will, however, stamp him as a genius in his line is the Cohen Brothers Department Store and office building--considered by many to be a marvel of architectural design and constructive ability surpassed by few in the country. His professional skill and labor were called into requisition in the erection of the governor's mansion at Tallahassee and the new public library for the Stetson University at DeLand and other smaller buildings throughout the state. He is likewise the architect of the Young Men's Christian Association Building and of the new one hundred and fifty thousand dollar hotel at Waycross, Georgia. In his profession he studies every phase of construction not only in the erection of buildings but also with regard to their environment and surroundings, that the whole may be harmonious and attractive.

His first design for Jacksonville, the Dyal-Upchurch Building mentioned above, was the first bank and office building to be erected after the fire of 1901; the YMCA of 1907, the first reinforced concrete building in the state; the Bisbee Building 1908, the first reeinforced concrete frame office building in Florida. In 1922, he was asked to remodel the state capitol and added two wings, a lobby, and a marble stairway to the structure (Anon. "H.J. Klutho, Designer of Skyline").

After losing a great deal of money trying to promote the motion picture industry in Jacksonville, Klutho returned to architecture full time and continued to practice until he was well into his 80's, far-exceeding the goal of \$10 million worth of building he had set himself more than half a century earlier.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The building lies on the parcel described as Block 40 H, lots 1-6, recorded in the Jacksonville, Hart's Map Deed Book of the Title and Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Frsyth Street, Jacksonville, as follows:

1910 Warranty Deed, February 7, 1910, recorded February 14, 1910, in liber 63 folio 160; passed from

Elizabeth B. Wilson and husband

to

Morris Cohen, et al.

1912 Warranty Deed, June 27, 1912, recorded July 15, 1912, in liber 96 folio 150; passed from

Morris Cohen, et al.

to

St. James Realty and Department Store.

4. Original plans, construction, etc.: According to a pamphlet on Klutho's buildings, probably released in 1941, the St. James' was built by subletting all contracts "direct by owner under supervision of architect, who also o-k'ed all bills and pay rolls. The original idea of owner was to build a 2-storied arcade with balconies running all around. Three designs were submitted. Architect then drew a four-story plan and soon convinced the owners that by adding two floors of offices it would not only become a shopping center but one of business too." These presentation sketchess are in the possession of Ms. Reed, Operations Manager for Cohen Bros., Room 409, St. James Bldg.

5. Reputedly this was Klutho's single largest commission; the building being worth \$1 million ("Jax and Duval Co. Builders"). The hall mark of the structure was the 75-foot octagonal dome over the third floor, later removed which had a glass cage of alligators beneath it (Reed interview).

The original plans are on microfiche in the files of the Building and Zoning Permit Division, seventh floor, City Hall, East Bay Street, Jacksonville. These include 11 sheets, dated 3/16/1911: basement, first floor through fourth

floor, and roof plans at 1/8":1' scale, Church, Duval, Hogan, and Laura Streets elevations, sections showing the framing of the dome, and the mezzanine plan at the same scale, and exterior details of the capitals and marquees, and terra cotta roof parapets at 1/2":10" scale.

6. Additions and alterations. There have been many minor interior and exterior alterations to the department store and the offices over the years. The original marquee or canopies have been removed and the exterior of the first floor "modernized" with a textured concrete coating over the brick, done in 1959, 1961, and/or 1969 according to work permits.

The most extensive alteration were done in 1947 by the Jacksonville architectural-engineering firm of W. Kenyon Drake and Associates. Escalators were installed, the octagonal glass dome over the third floor was removed and the open area it occupied on the fourth floor level was floored in. The Church Street elevation was walled in up to the fourth floor's roof line. The new floor space was devoted to office space (Building permit 1119/w/47).

All of the interior "Sullivan-esque" decoration and the brass elevator cages have been lost through successive remodels (interview).

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

The Cohen Brothers: A history of the Cohen Brothers, including some coverage of the building of their largest store in Jacksonville, written by Mrs. Natalie Glickstein, is to be published in the July-August issue of the Jacksonville Magazine by the Chamber of Commerce. The issue is still at press; hopefully a copy will be ready in time to include it with this report.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished:

- (a) (Plans: A set of original drawings exists on microfiche at the Building and Zoning Permit Division of City Hall, East Bay Street, Jacksonville. Drawings of the buildings were also published in The Western Architect in June, 1914, Vol. 20, No. 6 (Included).

- (b) Old Views: The presentation sketches are in the possession of Ms. Reed, Operations Manager for Cohen Brothers., Room N. Market Street, Jacksonville, has a view of the building taken ca. 1935 before the present design of the marquee and first floor exterior was wrought: The pamphlet "Some Buildings Designed by H. J. Klutho: 1901-1941" contains a view of the octagonal glass interior dome and of the northeast exterior corner.

Photographs showing the details of the cariatyds under the dome, a model of the terra cott exterior capitals with notes on the center of the dome, the dome under construction, and the completed interior main shopping area, and photographs by Cross of Jacksonville, of the overall model of th building are in the possession of Professor Harold Kemp, Department of Architecture, Grove Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida (to be photo-copied).

- (c) Deeds: Office of the Title and Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Forsyth Street, Jacksonville.
- (d) Permits: Building, work, and miscellaneous permits are on file in the Building and Zoning permit Dviision Office, seventh floor, City Hall, East Bay Street, Jacksonville.
- (e) Miscellaneous:

Carry, Walter T. Unpublished paper in fulfillment of the requirements of a six hour undergraduate thesis in architecture, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florid, undated, but before Klutho's death in 1964, containing biographical information, a listing of Klutho's buildings, and interviews with Klutho concerning his design philosophy. Copy in JACKsonville, Master Files of Office of Archives, History, and Records Management, Tallahassee, Florida.

Klutho, H. J., "Some Buildings Designed by H. J. Klutho: 1901-1941", undated; copies in Jacksonville, Mastert Files, as above.

- (f) Interviews:

Robert C. Broward, President Jacksonville, AIA. Klutho Historian, 1922 Felch Avenue, Jacksonville, August 4, 1975; concerning whereabouts of Klutho's building records and alterations to his buildings.

Charlotte Reed, Operations Manager for Cohen Brothers,
119 West Duval Street Room 401, July 23, 1975;
concerning Cohen Brothers history and documents
pertaining to the building.

2. Secondary Sources:

Clarke, S. J., publisher. Florida Biographical. Chicago:
S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914.

Glickstein, Natalie, "Cohens," Jacksonville, Vol. 12, No.
4, 1975, pp. 3-33.

Klutho, Henry John. Some Buildings of H. J. Klutho.
Jacksonville: The Drew Press, 1904.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. In the spirit of Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott Store in Chicago in function and decoration, the St. James Building featured a 75' octagonal glass dome and was considered to be a showplace by its designer, H. J. Klutho, Jacksonville's most prominent early twentieth century architect. (1912)
2. Description of fabric: Excellent.
3. Description of Exterior: Excellent.
4. Foundations: Concrete.
5. Wall construction, finish and color: Concrete brick. Checkered tile bordered panels under windows between mullions, piers. Piers between bays with prairie school type ornaments, Sullivanesque capitals (volutes with organic embellishment of cyma forms). Spherical form on attenuated stem at junction of volutes.

6. Structural system, framing: Polygonal columns throughout structure. Giant columns (polygonal) originally supported balconies around perimeter of skylight/dome.
7. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc. Central entry: Giant pilasters on central pavillion with terra cotta Sullivanesque capitals, segmental arch with checkerboard inlay and hexagonal grillework in tympanum in center, projecting above typical parapet.
8. Chimneys: None.
9. Openings, doorways and doors: Lower level doors replaced.
10. Windows and shutters: Lower level window replaced; plate glass.
11. Roof: Shape, covering: Flat deck, parapet, originally included octagonal dome (removed for addition of office floor space).
12. Giant pilasters on central pavillion with terra cotta Sullivanesque capitals, checkerboarded cross in circle motif at entablature. Projecting cornice with prairie school type rectilinear ornamentation.
13. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None. Central entry pavillion projects above typical parapet height. Cast iron ornaments and flag poles originally projected above parapet.
14. Floor plans: Basement, first floor, mezzanine, second floor, third floor, fourth floor house open plan retail sales area. Offices housed in third and fourth floors. Formerly offices occupied only space around front and side of dome.
15. Stairways: Elevators (originals replaced with modern equipment) west end. Escalators centralized in sales space.
16. Flooring: Modern tile and carpet.
17. Wall and ceiling finish: Original plaster covered with modern materials.
18. Doorways and doors: None of note.
19. Special decorative features, trim and cabinet work: Original decorative features (now removed or obscured may be noted in early photographs (see The Western Architect, June 1914). Sullivanesque and prairie school type ornaments embellished polygonal column capitals and balcony. Human forms on brackets supported struts of dome/skylight.

20. Mechanical equipment. Early elevators and skylight chndelier removed.

Site and surroundings: Excellent retailing location in center of downtown. Block occupied by store faces south, 190 degrees onto Hemming Park, a scenic and historic park occupying the central block of the city, in the hispanic manner.

Historic Landscape design: None. Hemming Park is block toward which the St. James Building is oriented is landscaped, marked by royal palm trees.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey incooperation with the Florida Bicentennial Commission and the Jacksonville Historical and Cultural Conservation Commission, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, at the HABS Field Office, Riverside, Jacksonville, Florida, by Susan Tate (University of Florida), project supervisor; Frederick Wiedermann (University of Florida), architect; Carolyn Hamm (Cornell University), project historian; and student assistant architects Robert Moje (University of Virginia), Ruthie Wiley (Mississippi Stte University), and Robert Wiltse (Louisiana State University).

Prepared by: Carolyn Hamm
Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
August, 1975

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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